Saturday 12 December 2015

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EXPERT

18 winter tips

Essential advice for shooting the season

APOY 2015

Meet this year's best amateur photographer

Location Guide

How to find and photograph **Kimmeridge Bay**

OUT OF THIS WORLD Breathtaking photos from Antarctica

D750

24.3 MEGAPIXEL

51 FOCUS POINTS

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7days

A week in photography

Every season has its merits, but I think winter is the most photogenic. Sure, autumn is pretty too, but it's a peacock, reliant on ostentatious displays of colour. Winter has different charms. When you get clear blue skies, as Justin Minns did for this week's cover, the clarity of the light is unbeatable. Wet streets are more photogenic than dry ones, and the aesthetics of frost and snow speak for themselves.

As an added bonus the starkness of the landscape, and the long shadows cast by a sun that never ventures far above the horizon, make it the best season for shooting black & white. My biggest problem can be finding the motivation to give up a warm sofa and brave the elements. This week's inspirational top tips for shooting in winter (pages 14-22) should solve that. I'll keep it handy for the next three months to remind me what I'm missing if I stay indoors. **Nigel Atherton, Editor**

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ONLINE PICTURE OF THE WEEK

© BOB WAGS

IMAGES MAY BE USED FOR PROMOTION PURPOSES ONLINE AND ON SOCIAL MEDIA

Ryan by Bob Wags

Nikon D3200, 50mm, 1/160sec at f/9, ISO 100

Portraiture is one of those genres that many try their hand at, but very few actually get right. Capturing an engaging and worthy portrait of an individual is so much more than pointing a camera at someone and snapping away. What exactly are you trying to convey? What is it about that person you're tying to reveal?

Here we have a fine example of what can be achieved with a willing model, a simple location and minimal lighting. Bob has gone for a dramatic low-key feel to emphasise a sense of drama and atmosphere. It's all about the eyes with this shot. There's such an intense stare that it's easy to become mesmerised by it. Crucially, the light has been strategically placed in order to highlight that gaze and draw us into the image.

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Send us your pictures If you'd like to see your work published in *Amateur Photographer*, here's how to send us your images:

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CD/DVD Send us a disc of high-resolution JPEG, TIFF or PSD images (at least 2480 pixels along its longest length), with a contact sheet, to the address on page 28.

Via our online communities Post your pictures into our Flickr group, Facebook page, Twitter feed, or the gallery on our website. See details above.

Transparencies/prints Well-packaged prints or slides (without glass mounts) should be sent by Special Delivery, with a return SAE, to the address on page 28.

NEWS ROUND-UP

The week in brief, edited by Chris Cheesman

LPOTY at Waterloo

Travellers passing through London's Waterloo Station can take their minds off the grind of their daily commute by viewing the free Landscape Photographer of the Year exhibition. Hosted by Network Rail, the show features 150 images from the contest, which was won by Andy Farrer from Dorset. The images will be show on The Balcony at Waterloo Station until 7 February 2016.

OM-D firmware boost

Olympus has enhanced 18 features of the OM D E M1 via a firmware upgrade, while a separate update aims to boost functionality of the E M5 Mark II. A focus stacking mode has been added to the OM D E M1 via firmware version 4.0. Meanwhile, E M5 Mark II firmware version 2.0 adds a colour grading tool designed to make 'movie editing a breeze'. Visit www.olympus.co.uk/cameras.

DxO One gets faster

DxO has increased the shutter speed of the DxO One and improved other features in response to users. Its version 1.2 software extends shutter speeds to 30sec 1/20,000sec (from 15sec 1/8,000sec) via a free update that also allows full manual control of aperture, ISO and white balance in video mode. Visit www.dxo.com/us/dxo one.

© MIKAEL BUCK

Amazing creatures

Close up photos of the smallest creatures in our homes have been captured by UK based photographer Mikael Buck. Buck used a Sony Alpha 7R II, a 90mm macro lens and filter to take his stunning images. See our feature in AP 2 January 2016 or visit www.amateurphotographer.co.uk.

Canon's 80-millionth EOS

A Canon EOS 5DS R (below) became the 80 millionth EOS camera to roll off the production line. Canon produced its first EOS, as a new generation of AF SLRs, in March 1987. The landmark comes in a year during which Canon celebrates two other milestones: the 10th anniversary of the EOS 5D series and the 110 millionth EF series lens.

© GETTY IMAGES

WEEKEND PROJECT

Christmas food

Whether you've slaved over a hot stove and produced an appetising treat, or you've let the shops take the strain, you'll find yourself with an abundance of tasty food over this festive period. From a simple assortment of mince pies to a celebratory glass of champagne – or even a full Christmas dinner – there are many fantastic photographic subjects you can focus your lens on at this time of year. If you've never tried food photography, now's the time to give it a whirl, but there are a few tricks you need to know to get the best possible results. Follow these tips and you'll create images that could grace the pages of a cookbook or glossy Sunday magazine – and a huge improvement on those unappealing shots that accompany the menu at your local kebab shop!

1 Shoot in daylight. You don't need a lot of space a nice bright window will be fine. Use a reflector, black or white card, or even tin foil to bounce light into shadows, or flag off areas of the image to balance the light as you need.

2 When setting up your shot, a relatively plain background is always a good place to start. Think about the colours don't choose a background that will clash with the food, or one that's so similar that the dish blends into it.

BIG picture

Eagle hunters ride across the mountains of Qinghe County in China

It's that time of year when the news agencies of the world take a look back at the year in pictures. Getty Images has begun collating some of its shots of the year and here we find Chinese Kazakh eagle hunters riding with their eagles during a local competition on 30 January 2015 in the mountains of Qinghe County, Xinjiang, northwest China. The festival, organised by the local hunting community, is part of an effort to promote traditional hunting practices for new generations in the mountainous region of western China that borders Kazakhstan, Russia and Mongolia. The training and handling of the large birds of prey follows a strict set of ancient rules that Kazakh eagle hunters are hoping to preserve.

3 Pay close attention to the way you plate up and present your food. Take some time to select only the best items to shoot and keep an eye on your portion sizes a smaller serving generally looks better than a plate piled high.

4 When photographing drinks, it is often best to backlight them, allowing light to shine through. This will make the liquid appear transparent and highlight any visual interest within the drink, such as ice cubes, garnishes and condensation on the glass.

Shoot in daylight and use a reflector to bounce light into the shadows

© JEN R CH

Words & numbers

"Today everything exists to end in a photograph"

Susan Sontag
American writer and filmmaker
1933 2004

20%
of UK women admit they edit photos of themselves before posting them online

SOURCE: DIGITALAB

Samsung's last camera launch was the NX500, which boasts an ISO range of 100-25,600, a maximum shutter speed of 1/6,000sec and is capable of shooting JPEG and raw files

Samsung pulls plug on cameras in UK

SAMSUNG is set to phase out sales and marketing of digital cameras and camcorders in the UK due to a fall in demand.

In a statement sent to AP amid reports circulating online, a Samsung representative said: 'We quickly adapt to market needs and demands.

'In the UK, we have seen a gradual and sustained decline in demand for standalone digital cameras and camcorders, and related accessories.

'For this reason, we have taken the decision to phase out the sales and marketing of these products.'

The UK statement added: 'This is a local decision, based on local market conditions.'

A similar statement that Samsung was gradually pulling out of the camera and camcorder market has reportedly been sent to *fotoMAGAZIN* in Germany.

And filmmaking website EOSHD reported that Samsung planned to discontinue the NX1 across Europe.

Samsung's move to pull out of the UK camera market comes less than a decade after it entered the global DSLR market.

Samsung first announced its own brand of DSLRs in January 2006 following a tie-up with historic camera maker Pentax.

Samsung's first DSLR was the six-million-pixel GX-1S – its own version of the Pentax *ist DS2.

The 10MP Samsung GX-10 followed later that year, based on the Pentax K10D.

In 2009, Samsung used the PMA Show in the US as the launchpad for its NX series of hybrid digital cameras. The NX was billed as a new concept, offering the performance and image quality of a DSLR but with the portability and convenience of a compact point-and-shoot model.

But the South Korean giant has not announced an NX camera since the NX500 in February this year.

The NX500's 28-million-pixel, backside-illuminated APS-C-sized sensor was borrowed from the NX1 announced at Photokina in September 2014.

In 2008, Samsung bosses had outlined the company's future plan to be one of the 'top three' brands for digital SLR cameras within two years.

In June 2014, Samsung America called on photographers to swap their 'outdated' DSLRs for a free $1,000 NX30 compact system camera, at an event held in Times Square, New York.

Olympus escapes UK fraud charges

THE UK'S Serious Fraud Office (SFO) has dropped its case against Olympus, which was caught in one of Japan's biggest financial scandals four years ago.

The SFO launched its investigation after Olympus whistleblower Michael Woodford was sacked after raising suspicions over $687 million in advisory fees paid in connection with Olympus's acquisition of UK medical firm Gyrus Group Ltd in 2008.

However, the SFO found there was not enough evidence to prosecute the camera maker under English law. The SFO added that it 'could not have prosecuted individuals in this case because Japan does not extradite its nationals'.

A Court of Appeal judgement in February ruled that English law does not criminalise the misleading of auditors by the company under audit.

Woodford, former Olympus CEO, submitted documents to the SFO offices in London shortly after he was fired in 2011. The Gyrus fee raised suspicions of wrongdoing as it represented around 35% of the value of the $2 billion Gyrus takeover.

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Tributes paid to Robert White founder

TRIBUTES have been paid to Robert White, founder of one of the UK's leading photographic retailers, who has died aged 62.

Robert (pictured), who had fought a courageous three-year battle against a rare form of cancer, founded Robert White Photographic in Dorset 33 years ago as a specialist retailer dealing in new and second-hand equipment.

The business grew from a small shop in Robert's home town of Poole to become one of the largest independent photographic suppliers in the UK.

Customers hail from as far afield as the United States and the Far East. Hardy Haase, managing director of Flaghead Photographic, which took over the Robert White retail business last year, had known Robert for 40 years.

Robert loved 'high-quality, well-designed, well-engineered products', Hardy told AP.

Robert had incredible engineering skills and a workshop where he displayed a passion for craftsmanship in sports cars, engines, watches and cameras – and a treasured collection of Leicas.

One of the greatest joys for Robert was handling a new Leica camera, said Hardy, adding: 'when he had oil on his fingers and exhaust fumes in his nostrils, he was happiest...'

© STU CULLEY

On Facebook, friend Ricky Cuss described Robert as a 'lovely, generous, interesting and humorous individual'.

Hardy continued: 'Robert was a very intelligent man with never-ending curiosity, a great character, eccentric some might call him, and we will miss him.'

Hardy first met Robert when he supplied Bowens lighting equipment to the Leslie Miller shop in Poole, where Robert worked at the time.

Robert died on 24 November from an uncommon group of cancers known as neuroendocrine tumours (NETs).

Ilford launches Studio inkjet paper range

ILFORD Imaging Europe has launched Ilford Studio, an inkjet paper that it bills as the 'digital equivalent' of traditional film photo papers. Designed to be compatible with Canon, Epson and Hewlett-Packard printers, Ilford Studio comes in two weights: 250gsm 'for the look and feel of a traditional photo paper'; and a 200gsm version for framed prints and posters. Each weight comes in both glossy and satin versions, in sheet sizes ranging from 10x15cm to 30m rolls.

Arnoud Mekenkamp, managing director of Ilford Imaging Europe, said: 'The Ilford Studio range has already received a positive response from customers that have used traditional photo paper in the past and are delighted to get the same photo quality from their digital prints.'

The new paper will run alongside Ilford's Galerie inkjet paper, which was relaunched last year following a rescue deal triggered by the demise of its former manufacturer, Ilford Imaging Switzerland.

Ilford Studio costs from £8.99 for a box of 100 sheets of 6x4in paper.

For the latest news visit www.amateurphotographer.co.uk

Get up & go

The most interesting things to see, to do and to shoot this week. By Phil Hall

LONDON

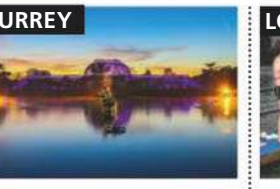
© LEVISON WOOD

Visions of Africa

This is your last chance to see images of Levison Wood's nine month journey through Africa along the route of the Nile, along with unique bronze sculptures by Rosamond Lloyd depicting the animals they encountered. All works are for sale, with 20% of proceeds going to the Tusk Trust.

Until 12 December, www.lagalleria.org

SURREY


© K T FANNER

Christmas at Kew

With a mile long sparkling path winding its way through the botanical gardens at Kew, fabulous photo opportunities abound. Bring your camera and enjoy the sights once the sun sets and the lights come on.

Until 2 January 2016, www.kew.org

LONDON

© SERPENTINE SWIMMING CLUB

Christmas Day swim

As well as the traditional swimming event held in the Serpentine on Christmas Day, there are a number of swims held across the UK that offer the potential for fantastic photos on 25 and 26 December.

25-26 December, www.serpentineswimmingclub.com

CARDIFF

© PUBLIC DOMAIN

The Apollo Archive

The 12 astronauts of the Apollo landings brought back more than 10,000 images of lunar exploration, and now they have been released for all to enjoy, in a new high resolution format. This exhibition offers a fantastic chance to see a selection of the often serene and beautiful pictures taken on these missions.

Until 6 March 2016, www.thirdfloorgallery.com

Christmas at Bressingham

Head to Bressingham for special Christmas steam train rides round the beautiful gardens and woodlands. The famous *Dad's Army* exhibition, which comprises a recreation of Walmington on Sea, will also be decorated for Christmas.

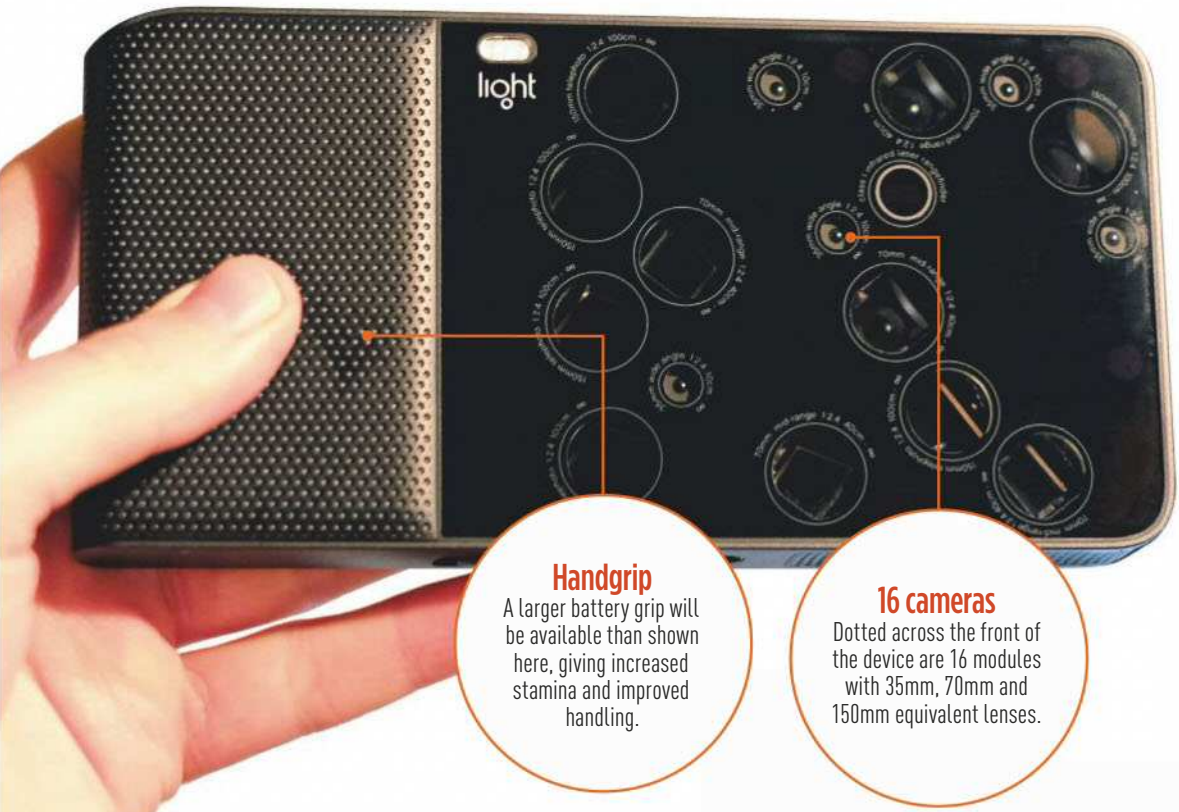
Until 24 December, www.bressingham.co.uk

NORFOLK

© DAVID HALL

Light L16

Could the multi-camera-module **Light L16** be the future of mobile photography? **Andrew Williams** gets hands on with a prototype



Touchpad
A small capacitive touchpad placed under the user's thumb will be used to change settings.

Handgrip
A larger battery grip will be available than shown here, giving increased stamina and improved handling.

16 cameras
Dotted across the front of the device are 16 modules with 35mm, 70mm and 150mm equivalent lenses.

At a glance

- Incorporates 16 camera modules
- Uses computational photography
- Up to 52 million pixel resolution
- 35 150mm equivalent range
- 128GB built in storage
- www.light.co

THE LIGHT L16 is out for DSLR blood. Despite being not much thicker than a pack of cards, Light claims it has the low-light noise handling of a full-frame DSLR. If it delivers, it will offer the best handheld night photography performance you can fit in a coat pocket.

Despite the scale of these promises, Light's marketing vice-president Bradley Lautenbach said the company was bowled over by the level of interest in the L16. It is already available to pre-order, for £1,449, and the plan is to release the first UK units in late 2016.

Is it real? Having seen a working prototype in action in London, and had a play with it ourselves, it appears so.

Mystery tech explained

So how does it work? The Light L16 is based on the concept of computational photography. Instead of using a single lens and a large sensor to produce its images, the data from a series of much smaller lenses and sensors is combined.

The Light L16 features 16 lens and sensor pairs, and at least 10 are used for each shot. But when cameras like the Ricoh GR and Sony Cyber-shot DSC-RX100 IV already offer excellent low-light abilities for their size – and cost a lot less – you could be forgiven for shrugging your shoulders.

However, there's more to it. The Light L16 offers a focal range equivalent to 35-150mm – something no pocketable large-sensor compact can match.

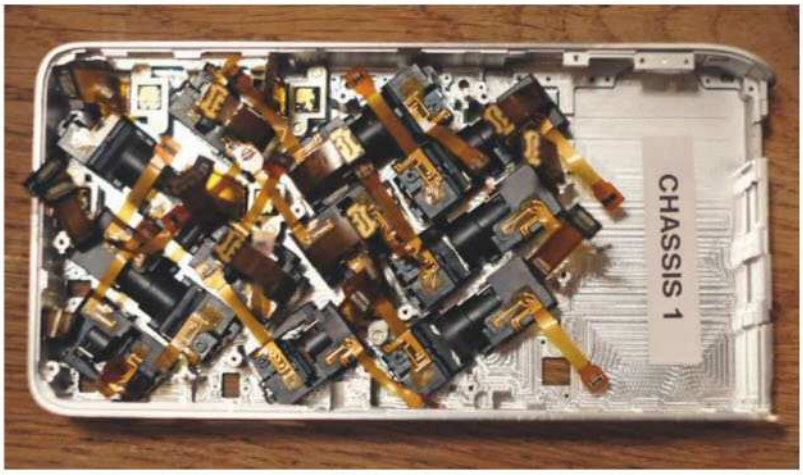
Life through 16 lenses

Instead of an optical zoom, inside the casing are six 150mm lenses, five 70mm lenses and five 35mm lenses. A folded optics design lets the 11 modules sit on their sides, while mobile-phone-sized sensors keep them tiny. Instead of optical zooming, digital-frame cropping is used for the focal lengths in between.

We're still not at the bottom of why 10 cameras fire for each image, though. The key is that there are little actuator motors behind the mirrors that reflect the light onto the sensors, letting the Light L16 alter their line of view.

When shooting a 35mm image, not only are the 35mm lenses used, but also the 70mm ones. 'We tilt the mirrors to reorient the 70mm lenses so they're each covering a quadrant of the image, with an extra one in the middle to make sure we have the highest quality there,'

The camera's base plate includes a standard tripod socket



The L16 uses 16 small camera models, with 35mm, 70mm and 150mm equivalent lenses

said Lautenbach. This gives the Light L16 an awful lot of data to work with.

Pixel peepers

The maximum resolution this array can produce is 52MP, which is similar to the Canon EOS 5DS R. This high resolution means that even when cropping is needed between the three native focal lengths, the resulting image is at least 13MP.

Whether it will really give the camera full-frame-level low-light performance when each sensor is just 1/3.2in in size and each lens has a fixed f/2.4 aperture depends on how capable the L16's processing algorithms are. Software will also dictate how good the Light L16's depth of field effects are. As with mobile phones, the cameras' small lenses give extended native depth of field. Instead, the L16 uses the parallax effect to work out the depth of a scene's objects.

Lautenbach says: 'The 35mm lenses have a slightly different perspective, which is how we calculate depth.' Light told us the team is working on getting proper 'object isolation'-style ultra-wide aperture effects, so we'll see how that pans out.

Mobile phone DNA

In essence, the Light L16 wants to take all the technology from phone cameras and put them into a product that will appeal to serious photographers. It has potential for HDR photography too, as it's able to capture multiple-exposure settings at the same instant, but Light is keeping quiet on these plans for now.

In use, though, there are definitely going to be elements that feel distinctly mobile-phone-like. The Light L16 doesn't have many physical controls. There's a shutter button, but everything else is controlled through the 5in touchscreen and a little capacitive touchpad just to the right of the display.

The L16's control interface is still a work in progress, but Lautenbach told us standard exposure modes like aperture priority and shutter-speed priority modes are on the cards. The whole system runs on Android, but Lautenbach suggests the L16 will behave much like a conventional enthusiast compact camera.

Unusually, though, the Light uses 128GB of internal memory and doesn't take memory cards. This allows the camera to ensure its storage is fast enough to juggle all the data involved. Lautenbach says the team is 'aiming for about 5fps' burst shooting, which is actually very impressive given the amount of data and processing required.

Still, for a camera designed for enthusiast it certainly pulls a few moves that'll alienate them.

First impressions

THE LIGHT L16 is hugely contentious. You can dismiss it as an *Innovations* catalogue reject or herald it as the future of photography, and neither view can be proven or entirely discarded. A little too much of Light's hardware and software remains a mystery for that.

Its physics make some sense, though. Using 1/3.2in sensors in a £1,500 camera may sound dismal, but four of these are tiled to make the most of the camera's huge images. Then there are another four sensors working underneath to compensate for the tiny photosites of these mobile-grade sensors.

Early sample shots show promise, and even in prototype form the Light L16's aluminium frame has a reassuring heft to it, especially with the battery grip attached. Light's makers clearly seem to believe in the credo that the best camera is the one you have with you. But we'll have to wait until 2016 to see if it's really worth reserving your coat pocket for.

Nikon confirms D5 DSLR plan

NIKON has confirmed the development of the D5, its next generation of FX-format DSLRs, as well as a new flagship flashgun, the Speedlight SB-5000, and wireless transmitter, the WT-6.

In a statement, Nikon said: 'Through the combination of this next-generation professional camera offering an even higher level of performance, these advanced accessories and the rich line-up of existing Nikkor lenses, Nikon is pursuing further possibilities for imaging expression.'

In January, it will be four years since Nikon announced the 16.2-million-pixel D4, ahead of the 2012 Olympics in the summer of that year.

Claimed to set a new benchmark in low-light performance, the Nikon D4 boasts a shooting rate of up to 11 frames per second.

The next Olympics takes place in Rio de Janeiro, Brazil, next August. However, the firm says that the launch date and price of the D5 have yet to be decided.

The Nikon D4 was announced almost four years ago, in time for the 2012 Olympics

Sony moves to resolve 'black spot' Alpha 7S II glitch

SONY has released a firmware update for the Alpha 7S II, 'designed to eliminate the occurrence of a black spot that may appear in frame when shooting in... a special set of high-intensity light conditions,' according to a statement.

The full-frame Alpha 7S II was announced at the IBC broadcast technology show in Amsterdam, the Netherlands, in September, priced £2,500.

Features include a top ISO of 409,600 and a shutter cycle of 500,000.

The 12.2-million-pixel Alpha 7S II is also designed to shoot 4K video with full-pixel readout and 'no pixel binning in full-frame format'. This should mean better image clarity.

Sony also upgraded the AF to offer 169 AF points for 'fast, precise focusing with greater accuracy'.

Additionally, the EVF was improved, to deliver 0.78x magnification.

To download, visit www.sony.eu/support.

Viewpoint Lars Rehm

Google's Snapseed 2.1 for Android is a big deal for those photographers who want to capture images in raw format on mobile phones

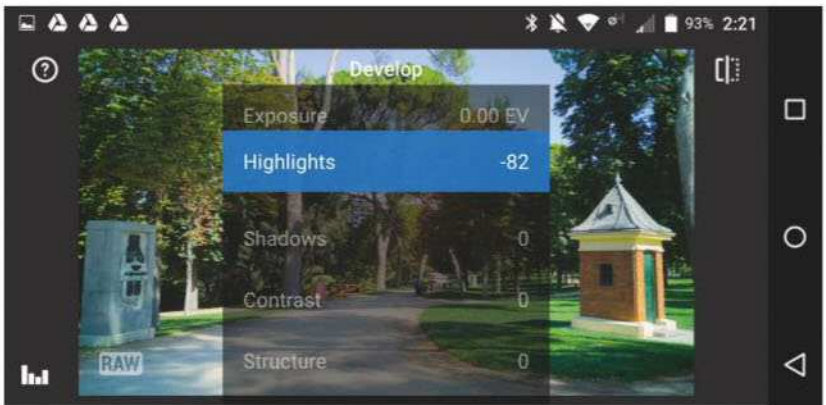
During the past couple of years, the ability to capture images in raw format has become quite common in smartphone cameras. Nokia started the trend with its high-end Lumia models and Google followed suit with v5.0 Lollipop of its Android mobile operating system, making the feature available on many Android phones with top-end specifications. Of the three most popular mobile operating systems, currently only users of Apple's iOS still have to make do without the flexible image format.

However, despite the widespread availability of the feature, raw shooting has so far not really caught on with mobile photographers. There is a very good reason for this: at this point in time it's still very difficult to establish a truly mobile raw workflow as raw-capable editing apps are few and far between. And those that do exist either come with user interfaces that have been designed for the larger screens of tablet devices, or offer very limited editing options and functions. And what's the point of shooting raw on your smartphone, if you have to download the images to your laptop or desktop computer for editing?

This is where the latest update of the arguably most popular mobile image editing app, Google's Snapseed, is bound to have a major impact and spread the use of the raw format on mobile devices much further. Version 2.1 of the free app comes with a brand-new raw-development module that allows for easy adjustment of exposure, white balance, shadows, highlights, image detail and other parameters of DNG files, right on the screen of your phone. Of course, this doesn't only work with raw files that have been recorded with the smartphone camera, but also raw files from virtually any camera, so long as they have been converted to the DNG format and copied to your device's internal memory.

If you want perfection and control in your raw processing you're arguably still better off using Adobe Camera Raw, Lightroom or some other desktop application. However, thanks to the latest Snapseed update, mobile photographers using the Android operating system can now design an entirely mobile raw workflow, from capture to editing and sharing. This will finally make raw on mobile a real option for advanced photographers who appreciate the advantages of the format.

Lars Rehm is a freelance photographer and writer, contributing to publications in the US, UK and Germany. In his former role as part of DPReview's testing team, he shot with countless digital cameras of all shapes and sizes, but nowadays he captures most of his images with a smartphone. Visit www.larsrehm.com or follow him on Twitter @larsrehm



Snapseed offers the ability to process your images in raw -82 Highlights

Do you have something you'd like to get off your chest? Send us your thoughts in around 500 words to the address on page 28 and win a year's digital subscription to AP, worth £79.99

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New Books

The latest and best books from the world of photography. By Oliver Atwell

© MATT HENRY

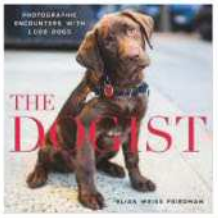
Short Stories

by Matt Henry, Kehrer Verlag, £32, hardcover, 112 pages, ISBN 978-3-86828-670-0

THE AGE of Aquarius (in popular culture, the period that spanned the '60s and '70s) is a period in US history where everything seemed to change. Liberals battled across the nation against white-shirt conservatives who were convinced the foundations of moral society were sinking into the bowels of hell. Music became politicised, drugs became spiritualised and politics became radicalised. And flares. Lots and lots of flares. Matt Henry, born in 1978 (funny how the myth of the '60s is often perpetuated by people who were born too late to experience it), has developed a body of work that, through a variety of characters, gives us a strangely uncanny overview of the USA's revolutionary period. Matt does this through a series of one-frame stories. His intricate sets, props, costumes and actors recreate (or re-imagine) small-town life and the photographer utilises these as small metaphors for the bigger picture. Each one is masterfully executed, and while occasionally you suspect the gloss is there to mask the lack of depth, this is still a thoroughly confident and impressive body of work. ★★★★☆

The Dogist: Photographic Encounters with 1,000 Dogs

by Elias Weiss Friedman, Artisan, £16.99, hardcover, 304 pages, ISBN 978-1-57965-671-3



DO YOU like dogs? Do you like photography? New York citizen Elias Weiss Friedman sure does. Back in 2013, Friedman decided to hop on the start-up bandwagon and birthed the cult-sensation The Dogist, a blog that involved Friedman walking the streets looking for dogs to photograph. What soon becomes clear is that some people really love their dogs, and some people, judging from the embarrassing clothes they make their dogs wear, must really hate them. If you're looking to get a dog, this book will do much to help you make up your mind. Or you could just get a cat. ★★★☆☆

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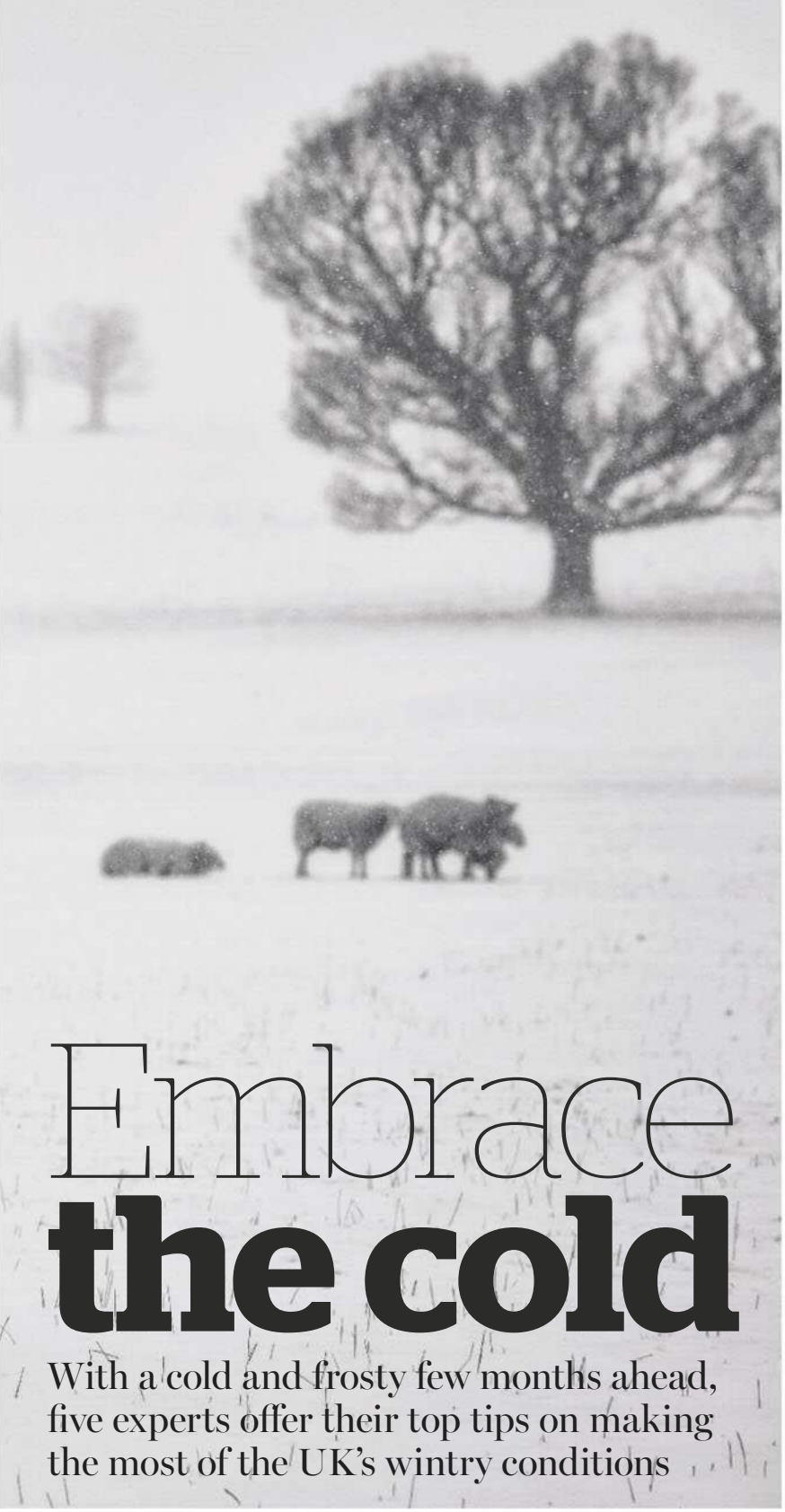
By playing with focal lengths in snowy conditions, you can create wonderful soft atmospheres

ALL PICTURES THESE PAGES © MARK LITTLEJOHN

Kitting your car out with winter tyres can help you reach your destination and achieve a unique shot

1 Use winter tyres or snow chains

The ability to travel on snow-covered mountain roads can be a real boon to a landscape photographer seeking that one-off winter shot. People used to living in cities can often forget that the local services of some areas are quite poor, with a number of roads not 'qualifying' to be cleared and gritted. (In the Lake District, if it's not a bus route then it won't be cleared). Winter tyres and snow chains can help you get to a location that others, who are less well equipped, can't. I can recall driving to Haweswater in Cumbria along a road that would have been impassable without winter tyres and coming away with a shot that received a Judges' Commendation in that year's Landscape Photographer of the Year competition.



Embrace the cold

With a cold and frosty few months ahead, five experts offer their top tips on making the most of the UK's wintry conditions

Mark Littlejohn
Mark is an award winning landscape photographer based in the Lake District. Winner of the Take a view UK Landscape Photographer of the Year 2014, he specialises in atmospheric early morning conditions.
www.markljphotography.co.uk

2 Go with a friend

If you're planning to take a winter walk away from the beaten track, I always recommend taking a friend along in case there's an incident.

I photograph mainly in the Lake District and the Highlands. Both of these locations are notorious for having a poor cell-phone signal. Couple this with the fact that the most interesting photograph is bound to be the one that no one else has taken, and you could end up being out of sight or sound of the nearest pathway or road. It's easy to break an ankle, or otherwise incapacitate yourself slipping on icy ground. You don't want to be alone without the ability to make a phone call when that happens.

From a purely photographic point of view, it's also quite handy to take a friend along so they can provide a useful bit of scale to a landscape shot. Additionally, this helps add human interest to an image that could otherwise look a bit grand and imposing, but without any real emotional connection. Some of my favourite winter shots have been of friends 'battling' the conditions.

3 Cold saps batteries, so take plenty

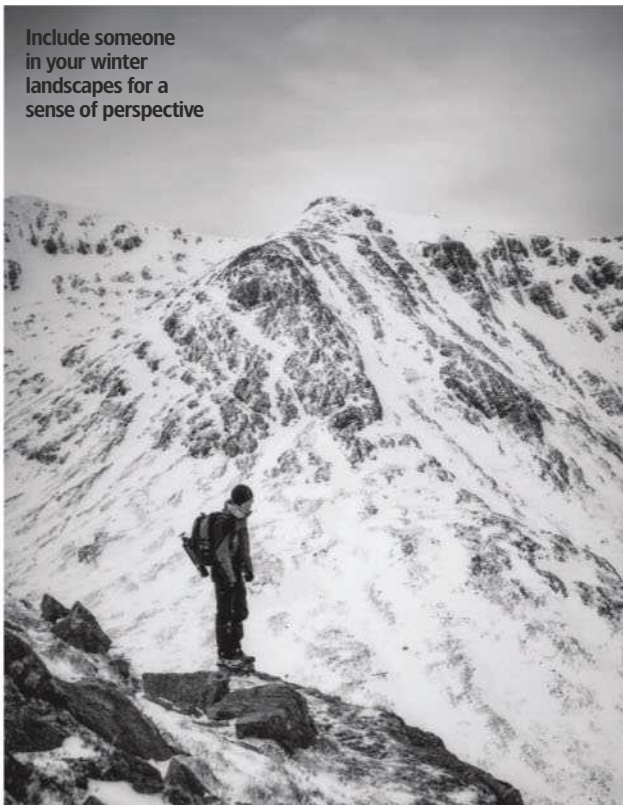
The power, or current, that batteries supply is dependent on chemical reactions, and freezing temperatures slow these reactions. Since the reactions are slowed, less energy is produced and the power output is lowered. This makes the battery work harder, and as a result it dies far more quickly and often unexpectedly. When you consider that at freezing temperatures you're likely to be having a great time in fantastic photographic conditions taking more shots than you might normally take, it can get a bit frustrating.

You can guard against this by turning off things like the rear LCD and rely just on an optical viewfinder if you have one. If the lighting conditions haven't changed you don't need to keep reviewing the histogram. Take any (and all) measures to keep the camera as warm as you can. Don't sit it on frozen ground. I also take three or four spare batteries and make sure all the spares are fully charged.

4 Experiment with longer focal lengths

If you play around with exposure times, focal lengths can emphasise the effects of the snow and they can even make falling snowflakes disappear from a shot. A longer focal length and larger aperture can cause a nice blurring of snowflakes and create a softer atmosphere.

I sometimes feel that having everything sharp from front to back can remove some of the elements necessary to get the viewer's imagination involved. A longer focal length also compresses the landscape and can allow you to get more depth to the falling snow – it can even make it appear to be snowing harder than it actually is. This layering effect is much harder to achieve with a wider focal length.



Include someone in your winter landscapes for a sense of perspective

© MARK LITTLEJOHN

Use a tripod in freezing conditions to avoid camera shake from cold hands

5 Dry off your tripod if it gets wet

Tripods tend to be designed with telescopic legs that are manufactured with small gaps, and these can retain quite a bit of water in the seals and joins.

If you've been out with the tripod standing in water or even melting snow, it can collect a surprising amount of liquid. On one occasion in sub-zero temperatures my tripod froze up completely and I was unable to use it. Since then, I tend to carry a large lightweight cloth that I can use to dry off the leg sections before closing it down.

In such conditions a tripod does become a necessary item of equipment – it's almost impossible to take handheld shots in freezing conditions with very cold hands and it's very difficult to use most cameras while wearing gloves.

6 Use sunglasses in winter and summer

There are two items I always carry in my camera bag all year round that are not, strictly speaking, photography accessories. These are a good-quality head torch and a pair of sunglasses.

When the mountains are covered in snow and ice and the sun is shining brightly, you really don't want to spend the day squinting while working out compositions. You'll end up with a splitting headache and lose interest in the day's shooting. Most opticians advise that there's more glare in winter than summer due to sunlight reflecting off snow.

A large percentage of damaging UV rays are reflected off snow and wearing sunglasses can protect against this. I've always worn them when descending snowy slopes as they help my perception of depth and make for safer walking.

© MARK LITTLEJOHN

Sunglasses can protect your eyes from glare off snowy landscapes, even when the sun may not seem particularly strong

ALL THREE PICTURES © DAVID TIPLING

David Tipling

David is one of the world's most widely published wildlife photographers. His pictures appear in hundreds of books and magazines, and have been used on wine labels and on large projections in New York's Times Square.
www.davidtipling.com

7 Test panning skills on red kites

With its forked tail, a wingspan of nearly two metres and reddish plumage, the red kite is one of our easier birds of prey to identify. Winter is a prime time to photograph them as they gather in large numbers at organised feeding sites around Britain. However, the kites' ability to perform spectacular aerobatics when taking food from the ground can test our panning skills.

Gigrin Farm, a feeding site in Powys, is popular with photographers. At the same time every day lumps of meat are thrown out. Within seconds a cloud of kites descend, swooping at speed to pluck food from the ground. It can be hard to capture images of individuals in the resulting mêlée, but concentrating on single birds as they enter the feeding zone and tracking them as they swoop in should pay off.

Lenses from 300-600mm are ideal for flying kites, and a fast responsive autofocus and fast shutter speeds are recommended to freeze the action.

Many species of birds use harbours and estuaries in winter, such as these dunlin in Langstone Harbour, Hampshire

8 Estuaries are full of opportunity

Our relatively mild winter climate and food-rich estuaries attract hundreds of thousands of birds that migrate from their breeding grounds in the Arctic. Some treat the muddy channels and creeks as a short stop to refuel en route south, and again on their return north. Others settle in for the winter. Large flocks of birds, big skies and often moody light are great ingredients for making interesting images, which can deliver a real sense of place and illustrate birds within their landscape.

A star attraction are the vast flocks of knots that, as they are pushed closer to shore on an incoming tide, swirl over the mud. If chased by a raptor, such as a peregrine falcon, they can also create wonderful flocks reminiscent of starling murmurations. Such spectacles can be seen on the Dee Estuary in Liverpool Bay, Morecambe Bay in Lancashire and on the east coast on the Wash in East Anglia. Arriving two or three hours prior to high tide will give the best chances for photography.

Smaller estuaries can offer more intimate encounters. Sites where a vehicle can be driven close to the mud and used as a mobile hide are ideal. Feeding teal, godwits, dunlin, curlew and redshank can commonly be photographed in this way. Where shorebirds and wildfowl share estuaries and harbours with people, they can be far more tolerant of human approach. So any busy coastal sites with people are worth checking out.

9 Find wild swans

Whooper and Bewick's swans (commonly referred as wild swans by birders) are two of our most photogenic winter visitors. Whooper swans fly in from their breeding grounds in Iceland to winter at a few locations around Britain. They can be photographed at Welney in the East Anglian Fens, Caerlaverock on the shores of the Solway in Scotland and Martin Mere in Lancashire. The daintier Bewick's swan (see below right) flies in from Russia, and the best sites at which to photograph them are WWT Martin Mere and WWT Slimbridge in Gloucestershire. Slimbridge offers the best opportunities for this species as they can be photographed at a swan's eye level, giving more impact to your image. Both species winter in both the north and south of Ireland too.

Photography is a little easier at Wildfowl and Wetland Trust reserves as the swans are fed each day at specified times. By being in position an hour or two before feeding time you should be able to capture dramatic flight and landing shots. Wild swans often stay in family groups, which leads to plenty of interaction between adults with trumpeting and courtship rituals adding to the photographic possibilities.

Because feeding is conducted close to hides, there's often no need for really long telephoto lenses and a zoom from 100–400mm can be ideal. Long lenses do have their uses, not least for isolating individuals that might otherwise be lost within a distracting mass. Whenever I can, I try to shoot low – a technique not always possible from hides at most reserves.

Justin Minns
Justin is an award winning photographer, specialising in East Anglian landscapes for clients, including the National Trust and BBC. Alongside his photography he also runs landscape workshops.
www.justinminns.co.uk

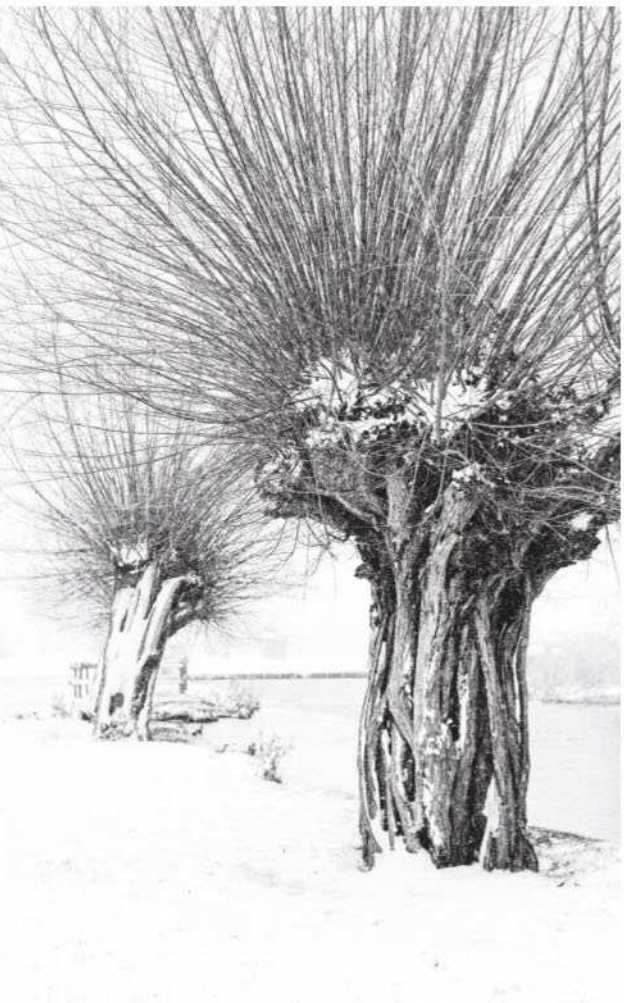
10 Keep your whites white

Regardless of which exposure mode you use on your camera, you're relying on the accuracy of the camera's built-in meter to judge your exposure – even in manual mode if you follow the meter to set your exposure. Most of the time the meter does an admirable job, but there are certain circumstances that are always going to confuse it. Unfortunately, a bright scene filled with snow is one of them.

The camera's meter measures reflected light and sets an exposure, which averages the scene out to a midtone (around 18% grey). With an average subject it won't be far off, but point the camera at something brighter (for example, snow) and the camera will underexpose to make it a mid-grey.

To counter this, add a value of at least 1-stop exposure compensation (or adjust the shutter speed/ aperture or ISO by the same amount if you're shooting in manual mode). Remember to keep an eye on the camera's histogram to make sure the snow is nice and white without blowing out the highlights too much.

However, this is one case where a bit of clipping won't really hurt – because snow is supposed to be white, after all.



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11 Stay closer to home

Snow is wonderful. Whether your surroundings are hidden under a thick white blanket or lightly garnished by a sugary, icing-like sprinkle of the stuff, everything is transformed. Familiar landscape locations are given a new lease of life ready to be rediscovered, and even overlooked everyday scenes can become interesting when simplified by a covering of snow. Against a white backdrop, bare trees become bold graphic shapes and roads look like black ribbons twisting through the white landscape.

Unfortunately, unless you in invest in the right gear for your car, travelling to distant locations can be difficult as the merest hint of snow seems to render our roads impassible. This makes it the perfect time to get out and explore your local area. I keep a list of places to explore within walking distance of home ready to do just that – and I try do it quickly, before the snow melts!

12 Make a day of it

Winter's later sunrises and shorter days are a distinct benefit for landscape photographers. And this is aside from the obvious advantage of being able to have a lie-in before ambling off with the camera at a reasonably timed dawn!

Most of the year, outside the golden hours at sunrise and sunset, as the sun rises overhead the lighting can soon become harsh and unattractive, making for high contrast and resulting in flat-looking images. In winter, the arc of the sun is considerably lower, reaching an angle of only 14.5° from the horizon on the shortest day (compared to 61.5° on the longest day).

With the sun lower in the sky, it creates softer side lighting throughout the day – when it's not raining! Couple this with changeable winter weather and there's a chance to be out shooting all day in dramatic conditions and still be home in time for tea.

© JEREMY WALKER

Jeremy Walker

Jeremy is an award winning photographer who specialises in high quality landscape and location photography around the world. His images have been used by advertising, design and corporate clients.
www.jeremywalker.co.uk

13 Be prepared

Much of the preparation for winter shooting isn't, strictly speaking, photographic at all. As I'm sure other photographers will tell you, preparing your car for winter travel is possibly one of the most important things you can do. Make sure your tyres aren't nearing the end of their lives, top up the screen wash with non-freezing cleaner fluid and carry a blanket, shovel and emergency rations (just in case things do go pear-shaped.) Small things such as keeping de-icing spray in your house (if it's in the car and the doors are frozen, you wont be able to get to it) and covering the car windscreen to prevent it icing up, will make things easier and quicker in the mornings.

As with your car, make sure your camera kit is ready for cold-weather action. Batteries should be fully charged, and try to pack your kit the night before so all you have to do in the morning is walk out the door with it. Make sure you carry silica gel to soak up any moisture that gets into your bag.

14 Use snowshoes

Not only can you get snowshoes for your own feet, but you can get snowshoes for your tripod as well. Deep, soft snow can be a real pain when setting up your tripod, as the feet will invariably sink a few inches – if not more. Snow is never going to be the strongest or firmest of foundations on which to work, especially if you are trying slow shutter speeds and long exposures.

To make your life a bit easier, try spreading the weight of the tripod feet over a larger surface area to reduce the potential of the tripod sinking. Manfrotto makes a set of three discs that are about the size of a saucer and will fit very easily and quickly to most makes of tripod. Gitzo also makes its own version. As a bonus, snowshoes are also very useful in other seasons and work well on wet sand, too.

15 First aid

As part of being prepared for winter shooting, particularly if you are going slightly off the beaten track, you should familiarise yourself with the basics of winter first aid. In particular, learn to recognise the first signs of hypothermia (which, in extreme cases, can prove fatal) and how to combat the problem.

Symptoms can be many and varied, but look for signs of violent shivering, pale cold skin, a blue tinge on extremities such as fingertips and the tip of your nose, slurred speech, lack of coordination and confusion. If any of the above is happening to you or a friend, seek shelter and try to warm up by adding more clothing, rubbing especially cold areas or by having high-energy food and hot drinks.

If in doubt, forget the photography and make sure you and your companions are safe. No shot – no matter how good the light – is worth risking a life for.

For further winter first aid advice visit St John Ambulance (www.sja.org.uk). Alternatively, try one of the mountain-rescue sites, such as the Llanberis Mountain Rescue Team (www.llanberismountainrescue.co.uk).

© JEREMY WALKER

16 Pack food and drink

Not only do you need to carry your camera kit, but you should also think about carrying high-energy food. The cold will sap your strength, and even if you're not hiking miles up a mountain but just standing around in the frost or snow, your energy levels can drop rapidly.

Foods such Trail Mix (dried fruit and nuts) and soft, chewy health bars are great and easily eaten with gloves still on, and while chocolate will give you an instant sugar boost you should always make sure it hasn't frozen before biting it! A small flask with a hot beverage (tea, coffee, hot chocolate or soup) is always worthwhile, but so is a bottle of water to help prevent dehydration.

Winter's later sunrises are a distinct benefit for landscape photographers

Steve Gosling

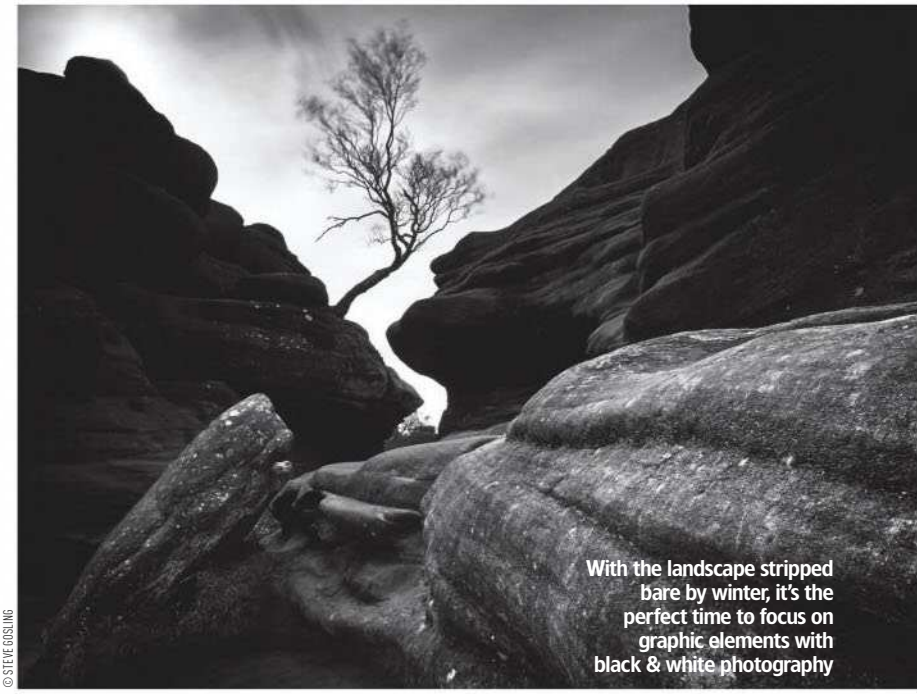
Steve specialises in creative landscape photos, with moody and atmospheric images being his signature style. He also runs workshops for all levels of photographers. His images have been published worldwide. **www.stevegoslingphotography.co.uk**

17 Go monochrome

My favourite time of the year for landscape photography in the UK is winter. The landscape is stripped bare, and reduced to a skeletal form. It's when the structure of the landscape is revealed, with walls, barns and buildings, bare trees and their branches all becoming a framework around which we can design our images. Line, shape, form, texture and pattern become even more important elements in the design of an image.

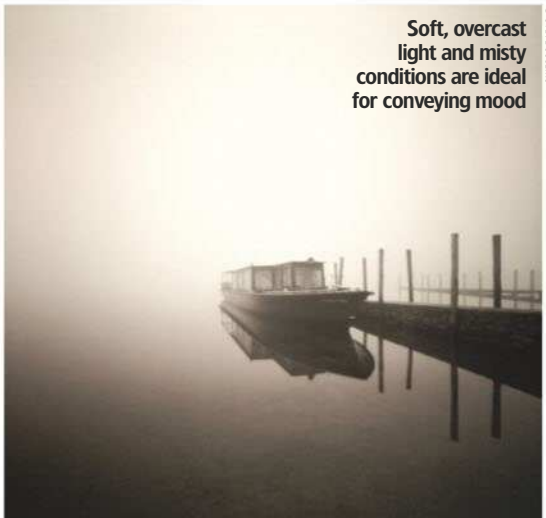
This is where black & white landscape photography comes to the fore. It's a very graphic medium, ideally suited to condensing a scene into a few minimalist elements. It's also the time of year when the landscape itself becomes transformed into a monochromatic arrangement of tones. The black & white photographer no longer has to grapple with the distraction of colour, as Mother Nature has given us a head start.

An additional bonus is that the winter brings with it photogenic weather conditions – snow, mist, fog and dramatic storm clouds – that all help to create a mood and atmosphere in our photographs. These are all conditions ideally suited to black & white images. It's no wonder that it's my most productive time of year!



© STEVE GOSLING

With the landscape stripped bare by winter, it's the perfect time to focus on graphic elements with black & white photography



© STEVE GOSLING

Soft, overcast light and misty conditions are ideal for conveying mood

18 Photograph the intimate landscape

Landscape photography doesn't always have to be about the big vista – sometimes the small details can say as much about a location as the grand view. These little vignettes of the landscape can easily be overlooked, though; we're so busy looking into the distance that we miss the photographs at our feet. Training yourself to avoid preconceptions of what you might find to photograph in a location, and looking beyond the obvious when you're in the situation, are important traits to acquire.

The winter months are ideally suited to photographing the intimate landscape. Soft, overcast light can bring colours to life and avoid the bleaching-out effect that strong overhead sunlight can often bring. Frozen leaves, frost on branches and fence posts, icicles and ice patterns all become mini-abstract studies of shapes and patterns.

And photographing details doesn't require you to travel miles to find picturesque locations. Even mundane, everyday objects can come to life and be transformed into photogenic objects once the wand of winter has been waved.

A few years ago I spent two hours on an incredibly cold morning standing on a step ladder photographing ice patterns that I'd found on the roof of my car – when I'd originally planned to drive off in search of interesting winter vistas! I looked for shapes that resembled something else – tree roots, organisms under a microscope, even skyscrapers and sailing boats. The result: a set of 12 images that I'm very pleased with, taken only feet from a warming cup of coffee!

Winter clothing

Successful winter photography is about a lot more than which lens or tripod you choose. Keeping warm is just as important

YOU MIGHT have the best camera kit in the world, and you might even be in an amazing location with perfect lighting conditions, but if you're distracted by your wet feet and the fact that your shivering is causing camera shake, then you're more likely to head home before you get the images you wanted. Here are some ideas for staying warm and dry this winter.

Head torch

Head torches have a number of uses. In poor light they can illuminate your kit, leaving your hands free to work, and they also light the way in front of you as you walk to or from a location in the dark. Just as importantly, they can work as a distress signal. As Jeremy Walker explains: 'The distress signal in the UK and Alps is six flashes, repeated after a minute. The response if this is seen is three flashes.'

Our choice Petzl Tikka, £30, www.petzl.com
With 100 lumen brightness, this simple and compact head torch features a wide beam setting and is powered by three AAA batteries.

Hat

Most of our body heat is lost via our heads, so if you're out in the cold a cosy hat is a must. There are plenty of styles to pick from, but a simple beanie is a good starting point.

Our choice Sealskinz Cable Knit Beanie, £28, www.sealskinz.com
Thanks to the acrylic knitted outer, this close fitting beanie hat is waterproof, as well as being windproof and breathable. A micro fleece lining gives warmth and moisture control.

Layers

Jeremy Walker's advice is to dress using the layer system. Instead of simply pulling on a thick jumper, wear several thin layers to build up the right thickness and trap heat between each one.

Our choice Craft Be Active Extreme Base Layer, £35, www.craft.se
It may be designed for active pursuits, but this is still a great starting point for any photographer who needs to keep warm. Simply build up the layers on top.

Gloves

Gloves and photographers don't generally see eye to eye, with standard winter gloves making it hard to operate your camera. However, there are a few companies producing thin (but warm) gloves that ensure fiddling with buttons is a breeze.

Our choice MacWet Climatec Long Cuff, £29.99, www.macwet.com
These gloves feature a warm fleece lined backing with a palm made from Aquatec material. They're available in 14 sizes.

Down jacket

If you're planning to spend a lot of time outside in the cold, then a decent winter jacket is a must. The small, fine feathers in a down jacket are incredibly light, yet will keep you snug and warm as they create thousands of tiny air pockets that trap and retain warm air. The downside, though, is that they're not particularly suited to heavy rain, as the down feathers stick together and lose their ability to retain heat. With that in mind, try to go for options that have waterproof outers.

Our choice Rab Electron, £230, www.rab.equipment/uk/
With a water resistant Pertex outer shell and 800FP goose down for exceptional warmth, the Rab Electron has a generous cut, to allow layers to fit underneath.

Footwear

You really don't want to be scrabbling around in a pair of old shoes or trainers. Dedicated walking shoes are a must they'll grip better, support your feet more and keep them far warmer.

Our choice Merrell Norsehund Omega Sport, £100, www.merrell.com
This high performance waterproof walking boot features a range of technologies that includes a working comfort range right down to a chilly 32°C.

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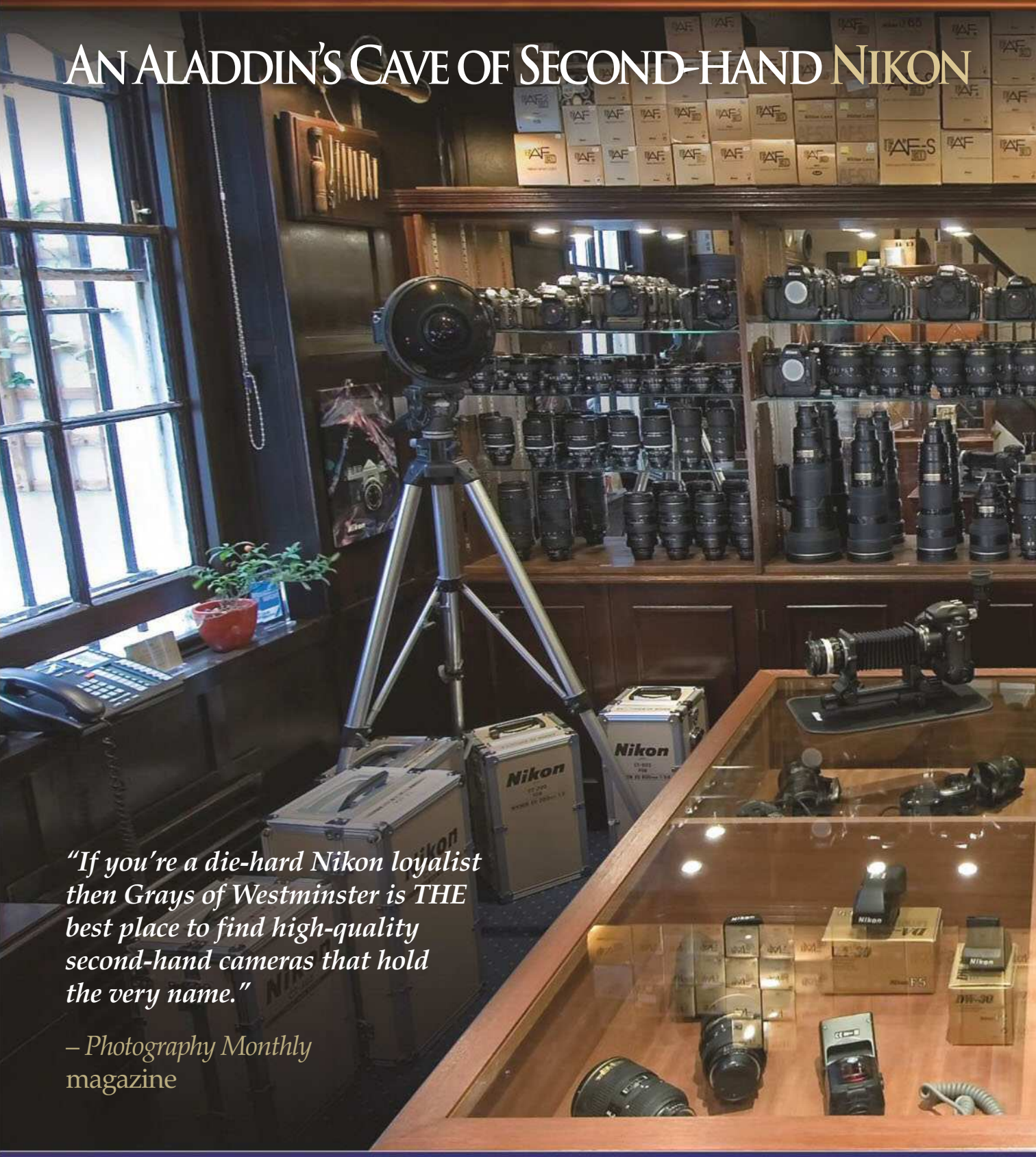

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– *Photography Monthly* magazine

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LETTER OF THE WEEK

Think pic

Over the years I've dipped in and out of photography as finance and family commitments allowed. AP has always been my magazine of choice and over time you've published some truly stunning images, but the 14 November issue had some of the most thought-provoking pictures I've seen for many years.

In *News*, I was struck by the two seemingly simple images taken by Nick Hedges for Shelter Scotland. They made the viewer think, and remember how things once were.

Turn a few pages to the *Time and the city* feature and you have Matt Weber's New York City images. The soldier looking at the entrance to the 'adult' cinema was particularly interesting; as a viewer you want to know what happened next – did he or didn't he see the show? In the same feature there's also a boy astride a BMX holding a gun. That single image is as terrifying – on so many levels – as any I've ever seen.

Thanks for making us think.
Peter J MacWillson, north Lincolnshire

7days
Photographer tracks down subjects in iconic pictures

Thanks for the very kind comments, Peter. We try to make sure that AP has a good balance of articles for all photographers, and we like to show incredible images by names you may not be familiar with. There's so much great work out there that deserves to be shown to a wider audience – Richard Sibley, deputy editor

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Kit skills

I've just filled in the AP poll on whether equipment limitations have ever affected how I shoot. And of course, they have! I'm sure this is part of the way that one's own style develops.

Indeed, a commonly suggested exercise is to go out with only one lens for the day and see how it opens up the creative vistas.

Of course, we usually try to plug gaps as soon as we can afford to. Yet my experience in one of the online communities definitely shows that the people who have the most equipment are often not very good at actually using it: they keep making the same mistakes! (They often stubbornly get exposure wrong by using spotmetering and manual mode, when they seem to need to stick, very firmly, to the 'green-rectangle' setting.) He who owns a Canon 135mm f/2 need not *always* use it at maximum aperture, need he?

Conversely, one of the most impressive online posters I know uses an original Canon EOS 5D (rather than the now-standard EOS 5D Mark III) and three beautifully chosen fixed-focal-length lenses.

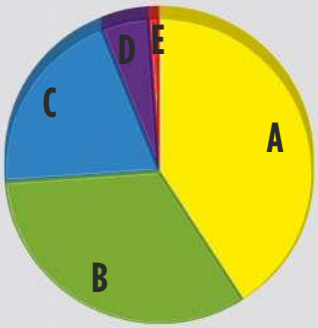
As for me, my concession to change is simply to love the 45mm lens on my Olympus OM-D E-M1 almost as much as I love the Zeiss Planar 85mm on my Contax.
John Duder, West Midlands

Although the poll question could have been phrased a little better (my fault!), this was what I was getting at. People work in a certain way because of the equipment they use at the time. We find ways of working, or achieving a certain look, despite not having the *correct* piece of equipment. Sometimes all the gear in the world isn't the answer. Although, saying that, who doesn't like a shiny new lens? – Richard Sibley, deputy editor

Finder fix

I read Andy-B's 'Viewfinder vexation' question in *Technical Support* (AP, 31 October) with interest. I had a similar issue when I bought my Olympus OM-D E-M5 Mark II. The EVF was repeatedly black when I tried to use it, taking a second to switch on and resulting in multiple missed photos.

I believe Andy-B may be misdiagnosing his



In AP 21 November we asked

Have you ever gone on a foreign trip just to take photographs?

You answered

A No, I go wherever I find interesting, but will of course take photos while I'm there	41%
B Yes, I've visited other countries specifically to take photos	33%
C No, it's never been the sole purpose of my travels, but it has been a deciding factor	20%
D No, but I'll have a camera wherever I travel and may take the odd snap	5%
E No, when I go away it's a break and I rarely get my camera out	1%

What you said

'Surely only professionals can afford to travel specifically to take photographs? Most of us can only afford to combine our holidays with our hobby'

'Several times each year. But, while taking photographs is always the primary objective of my trips, I also hugely enjoy seeing new places, meeting new people and learning about different cultures'

'I've been abroad once to exhibit pictures and take a few more. I wouldn't have gone otherwise, so I suppose photography was responsible for it!'

Join the debate on the AP forum

This week we ask

What is the largest-capacity memory card that you own?

Vote online www.amateurphotographer.co.uk

Guess the camera

Every other week we post a photograph of a camera on our Facebook page and all you have to do is guess the make and model. To guess the make and model of this camera (above), head over to **www.facebook.com/Amateur.photographer.magazine**. Forum members can also enter via the forum.

The cover published in AP 21 November is from 4 July 1923. The winner is John Palmer from Bath, whose guess was closest to the correct date.

problem. It's not that the switch between live view and EVF is slow, it's that the EVF is actually asleep and has to wake up.

My camera was defaulted to EVF Quick Sleep mode, so if you remove your eye for a few seconds it sleeps. To wake from sleep takes a second – if you quickly try to use the EVF, you just see black. This issue can be resolved by turning Quick Sleep off in menu K.
Jamie Goodhart, via email

© ADRIAN JOHNSON

Adrian Johnson's image taken with a Samyang 300mm mirror lens

Lens fun

I've been interested to see the debate in your pages regarding Ohnar mirror lenses (*Inbox* AP 31 October and 21 November). I do hope this doesn't put readers off the idea of mirror lenses in general.

'Back in the day', mirror lenses were in vogue but cost more than I could justifiably afford with a young family. Now that I'm a bit older, I saw a Samyang 300mm mirror lens advertised at a very reasonable price and decided this was my chance to finally give one a try. I rather liked the idea of the famous doughnut highlights that apparently put off many potential purchasers.

What I found is that I have a most useful piece of kit. The lens fits neatly into the small gadget bag that I use for my Panasonic Lumix DMC-GX7, yet the focal length is equivalent to 600mm for a 35mm camera. I recently had a practical demonstration of its usefulness while on the way to meet my family and take some outside portraits of the children at a lake. As I was walking, I spotted beautiful swans in the distance and was so glad that I had the mirror lens with me, as I wouldn't have carried a long telephoto on such an occasion. I've included a sample shot (above) that has attracted several 'faves' on Flickr.

The pity is that modern digital cameras, which are designed for autofocus lenses, don't have the focusing aids (rangefinder or screens built into SLR viewing mirrors) that mirror lenses really need. So, as your correspondents have written, they are very difficult to focus manually.

However, they are fun and isn't that what 'amateur' photography is supposed to be about? Besides, the blessing of digital photography is that trial-and-error focusing costs nothing in wasted film!
Adrian Johnson, Surrey

As I said in my last reply, it's great working with odd equipment and trying to get results. I love putting older lenses on modern compact system cameras. It gives them a new lease of life and certain lenses have very distinctive looks that actually add to the image – Richard Sibley, deputy editor

In next week's issue On sale Tuesday 15 December

FROM TOP LEFT © MARK BAUER OSCAR DEWHURST JERRY WEBB AND JAKE H COX

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AF-S Nikkor 24-70mm F2.8E ED VR

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Quick specs
Focal length 24–70 mm
Image stab. Yes (4 stops)
Lens mount Nikon F (FX)
Max aperture F2.8
Min aperture F22.0
Min focus 0.38 m (14.96)
Max magnification 0.27×
Weight 1070 g (2.36 lb)

AF-S Nikkor 24mm F1.8G ED

NEW

Quick specs
Lens type Prime lens
Image stab. No
Lens mount Nikon F (FX)
Max aperture F1.8
Min aperture F16.0
Min focus 0.23 m (9.06)
Max magnification 0.2×
Weight 355 g (0.78 lb)

AF-S Nikkor 200-500mm F5.6E ED VR

NEW

IN STOCK

Quick specs
Lens type Zoom lens
Focal length 200–500 mm
Image stab. Yes (4.5 stops)
Lens mount Nikon F (FX)
Max aperture F5.6
Min aperture F32.0
Min focus 2.20 m (86.61)
Max magnification 0.22×
Weight 2300 g (5.07 lb)

AF-S 300mm F4E PF ED VR

NEW

IN STOCK

Quick specs
Lens type Prime lens
Focal length 300 mm
Image stab. Yes (4.5 stops)
Lens mount Nikon F (FX)
Max aperture F4.0
Min aperture F32.0
Min focus 1.40 m (55.12)
Weight 755 g (1.66 lb)

D810

Quick specs
Sensor size Full frame
Sensor type CMOS 36MP
ISO Auto, 64-12800
Lens mount Nikon F
Screen size 3.2
Screen dots 1,229,000
Min shutter speed 30 sec
Max shutter speed 1/8000 sec
Weight 980 g

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D750

Quick specs
Sensor size Full frame
Sensor type CMOS 24MP
ISO Auto, 100-12800
Focal length mult. 1×
Screen size 3.2
Min shutter speed 30 sec
Max shutter speed 1/4000 sec
Weight 750 g

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Quick specs
Sensor size APS-C
Sensor type CMOS 24MP
Lens mount Nikon F
Articulated LCD Fully articulated
Max shutter speed 1/4000 sec
Storage types SD/SDHC/SDXC

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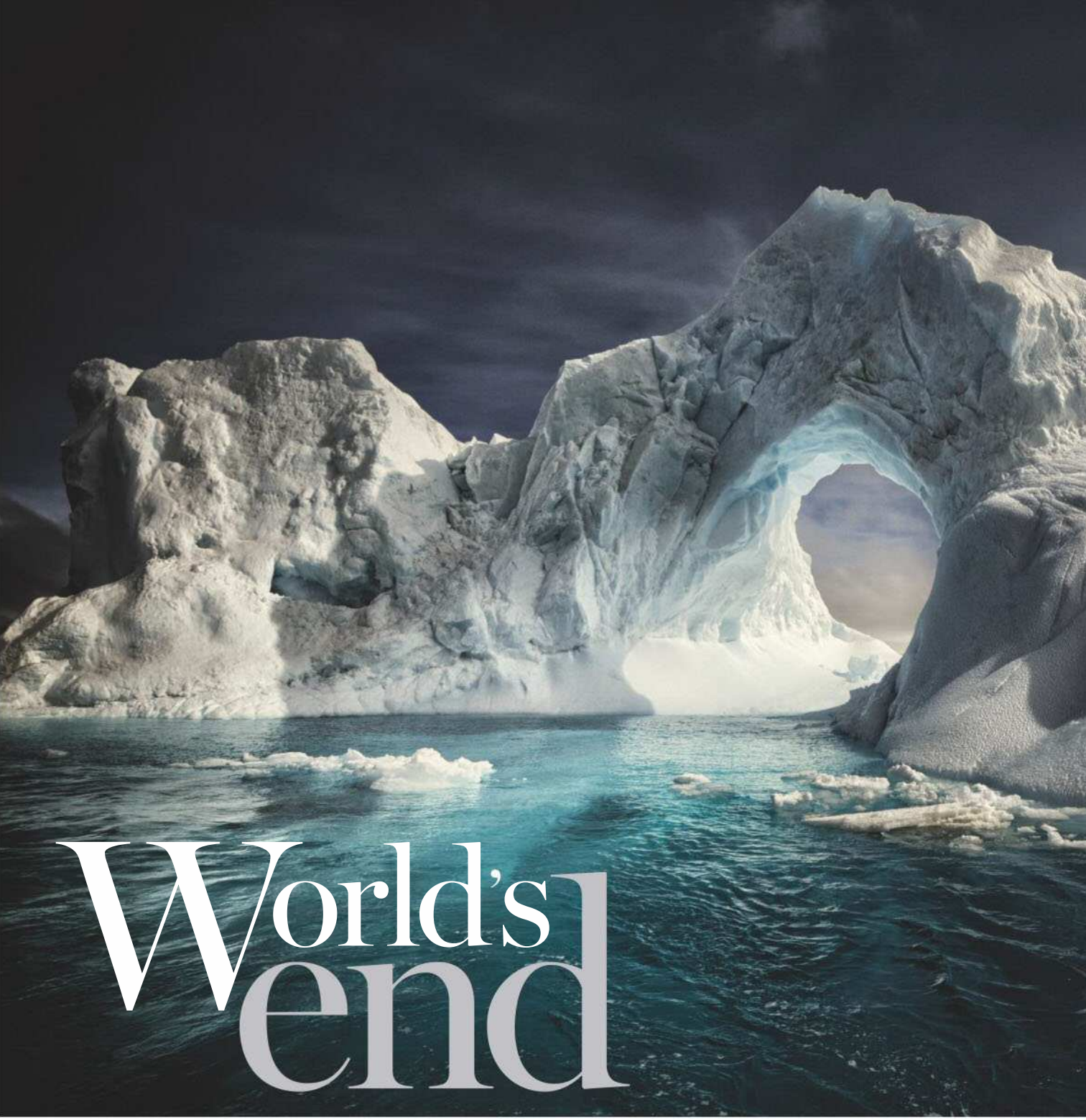

World's end

Italian photographer **Alex Bernasconi** talks to **Oliver Atwell** about his epic journeys across Antarctica and South Georgia, and the book that was the result

Anyone familiar with nature photographer Alex Bernasconi's previous work will probably occupy one of two camps when viewing his new publication *Blue Ice*. The first will feature those who'll be caught a little off guard by the stark contrast between this project and the vibrant dust-inflected frames caught within the pages of his previous publication *Wild Africa*. Others will likely see this project as an inevitable next step on Bernasconi's journey to capture the most extreme zones of the world. The one thing that both will agree on is that *Blue Ice*, which chronicles Bernasconi's journey through South Georgia and Antarctica, is a real achievement. The images suck you into a yawning white void where snowscapes and icescapes stretch for endless miles, icebergs and glaciers dominate the horizon, and the only company to be found are penguins and seals.

Above: A wonderful arch in an iceberg near Paulet Island, off the north-eastern end of the Antarctic Peninsula. The island is composed of lava flows and is capped by a cinder cone surrounding a small summit crater. Geothermal heat keeps part of the island ice-free

Bernasconi journeyed across open sea on a ship called the *Zodiac*. As he says in the introduction to the book, there are actually several ways a traveller can reach the Antarctic Peninsula: 'When the weather permits, many people fly from Chile to avoid days of sailing in the stormiest seas in the world. But the experience of navigating the routes of the great explorers, and visiting the wonderful Falkland Islands and South Georgia with their spectacular views and fauna

ALL PICTURES © ALEX BERNASCONI

Above: A black-browed albatross, Westpoint Cove, Westpoint Island, north-western Falkland Islands

Below: A tabular iceberg in the Southern Ocean

before reaching the Antarctic Peninsula, makes this expedition one of the most incredible a man can take.'

'After many years spent mostly in Africa I needed to get out of the dust,' laughs Alex, now back within the welcome warmth of central heating. 'Joking aside, I'm always trying to widen my perspective on the natural world and I'm especially attracted to the most diverse environments. I've been photographing polar bears in Churchill [Canada] and Svalbard [Norway] in recent years, and I just fell in love with these wild areas. The ability of animals to live and survive in such extreme conditions is astonishing, and the remoteness of these places has a magnetic attraction for me. Antarctica is the most remote, extreme place on earth, and the decision to plan a longer expedition there really just came as a natural consequence.'

It's unsurprising to hear Alex say this. Looking through his images, the uniqueness of the region is vividly apparent. It extends to a number of elements, all of which are vital components in conveying the almost-alien nature of the land.

'I hope that's something I'm able to explain through my images,' says Alex. 'I don't think words can describe it. Everything is

King penguins, off Salisbury Plain, South Georgia

unique: the climate, light, scenery, fauna – all these elements carried me into another dimension. It really is like being in another world. I've been in some of the most remote locations of the world, but when you embrace an expedition so far away from any human presence, you really feel a deep contact with nature like in no other place on earth.'

Alex says what surprised him more than anything was just how much life is present – even when the extreme weather conditions wouldn't facilitate human survival. Although, as he grimly notes, we can still have an impact on the environment despite our corporeal absence there.

Safety measures

Faced with such extreme conditions Alex, naturally, had to take measures to ensure his equipment was kept safe at all times. It would be more than a little heartbreaking to go out into such a far-flung field and find your equipment crippled.

'The extreme conditions you find at these latitudes make it necessary to carry more gear in case of malfunctioning or damage,' says Alex. 'Salt spray, rain, wind and cold can affect even the sturdiest equipment in Antarctica. I usually worked with and carried two bodies (a Nikon D3X and D700) and zoom lenses to avoid changing them too frequently. I also had two spare bodies on board in case I needed them. An essential part of my equipment is a waterproof dry bag to protect my backpack during transports and landings, where you can accidentally fall in the water or get soaked by a wave. I should also mention that rain protectors for camera and lenses are vital to work on rainy or snowy days.'

Alex admits that he's not the kind of wise photographer who's able to pack the strictly necessary equipment. As he says, he doesn't want to miss a shot just because he decided not to carry a few extra kilograms. With that in mind, it's unsurprising to hear that he took along every type of lens, ranging from a 14mm to a 500mm, and actually had the chance to use them all.

Above: Stand-off in St Andrew's Bay. An elephant seal vs a king penguin

Blue Ice by Alex Bernasconi is out now. It is published by Papadakis and is priced at £30

'So far away from any human presence, you really feel a deep contact with nature'

'I also had accessories, such as Lee ND filters,' says Alex. 'I used these for most of my landscape images, and at times, a polariser. However, it can be very tricky to use large rectangular ND filters when it's windy or drizzling. Unfortunately, that's often the case in a place like South Georgia and Antarctica.'

There are shots in *Blue Ice* that are breathtaking in their scope. Of particular note are his images of icebergs. That was when pan-stitching came into play.

'Panoramas sometimes are the only way to express the vastness, the greatness and magnificence of landscapes, so those incredible icebergs dotted with penguin colonies under dramatic skies can be appreciated only with very wide images,' he says. 'Shooting them from a moving ship meant I couldn't use the pano equipment I'd used on

Above: A close-up of king penguins on Salisbury Plain, South Georgia, where it's estimated that there are two to three million breeding pairs

'I use photography as a medium to express my emotions and vision of the natural world'

land, so they've been produced handheld with wideangle lenses, mainly the 24-70mm f/2.8, then stitched together in Photoshop.'

Into the wild

What's particularly striking about *Blue Ice* is the delicate balance between wildlife and landscape imagery. While there are occasions when these two genres are distinct within the work, there are other times when the two genres blur. Perhaps it would be more convenient to identify Alex as a nature photographer.

'I love to live in and to explore the wilderness,' says Alex, 'and I use photography as a medium to express my vision of the natural world. Nevertheless, I'm passionate about all different kinds of photography as an art – street, conceptual, photojournalism, travel, portraits and abstract, not only nature and wildlife. I'm considered a nature photographer because nature is the main subject of my work, and that includes being a wildlife photographer and a landscape photographer too. But I'm not out there just to record and classify all the species that I meet, or put a flag in all the places I've explored. I just want to convey my strong emotions and feelings when I witness incredible beauty, and strive to move people's awareness about the importance of conservation.'

Alex has always been keen to get as close as he can to the wildlife he encounters, particularly as he prefers to use short lenses, or realise extreme close-ups with zoom lenses. 'I'd like the viewer to feel immersed in the image,' says Alex. 'I want them to be out there with me, in front of a lion, a bear or a seal, to look into the animal's eyes and reflect about their conditions or thoughts, or to imagine the feeling of being surrounded by wildlife in every direction, to feel cold

An iceberg in Erebus and Terror Gulf, on the south-east tip of the Antarctic peninsula. Its form is reminiscent of a Navajo Native American with headdress

'I'd like the viewer to feel immersed in the image – I want them to be out there with me'

or hot, to shiver, to smell the scent, to hear the sound. I also like to include the landscape in my wildlife images, so that the link between them and their environment is clear.

'As a general rule, I usually approach wildlife in a way that lets them get used to my presence. Lying very still on the ground, until they don't care about me any more and behave naturally, as if I wasn't there at all. In this way they set their own comfort distance.'

According to Alex, penguins are particularly curious and friendly and are therefore easy to deal with. Elephant seals, however, are massive and can be ill tempered and, as a result, require more caution.

'Fur seals are particularly aggressive, and it's always better to keep your eyes open because they can charge and bite you with no warning,' says Alex. 'An injury in these regions can be dangerous, being so far away from any hospital and where being evacuated can be impossible for days.'

While viewers are, of course, welcome to see *Blue Ice* as simply a collection of stunning images, that would mean missing the deeper meaning. The fact is, those inexplicably strange landscapes, and the animals that inhabit them, may not be there for much longer. The world and its climate are shifting at frightening rates. As a result the ice is turning to water and the wildlife is finding itself starved and displaced.

'Antarctica is so vast, remote and difficult to monitor, yet we still have clear signs of devastating changes,' says Alex. 'It's impressive to think that the Antarctic ice sheet contains enough ice to raise worldwide sea levels by more than 60m if melted completely. Species such as the Adélie penguin populations have been declining in recent years due to reductions in krill and changing weather conditions in their traditional nesting areas. Emperor penguins are also highly vulnerable and are predicted to suffer when the world's average temperature increases by 2°C.'

Alex Bernasconi is a renowned adventurer, traveller and multi-award-winning nature photographer. His images have been featured in multiple publications and in 2011 his book *Wild Africa* won a gold medal as the best photography book at the Independent Publisher Book Awards. **www.alexbernasconi.com**

Bernasconi's project has much in common with Werner Herzog's humbling 2007 documentary *Encounters at the End of the World*, a film that saw the filmmaker travelling to meet the scientists residing in the McMurdo Station research centre in Antarctica. Through the eyes of the people Herzog interviews we see our place within the world and just how spellbinding even the most seemingly inhospitable regions of our vast planet can be. It's only when you leave the chaos of the urban lifestyle behind that you can truly see where we stand with regard to nature. Like Herzog, Bernasconi delivers us a vision of our place on earth. It's at once awe-inspiring, comforting and alienating. However, the reality is that the human influence on these regions is nothing short of heartbreaking. Thankfully we have *Blue Ice* to remind us what we stand to lose. AP

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Reader Portfolio

Spotlight on readers' excellent images and how they captured them

1

2

Warm Evening on the River Windrush

1 Standing at the bend of the river, Martyn was able to shoot directly into the setting sun as it drenched the landscape in warm, evening light
Canon EOS 5D Mark II, 17-40mm, 1/13sec at f/11, ISO 100, tripod, cable release

Wheat Field at Sunset

2 Martyn has composed this image so that the tractor lines lead our eye into the sky, where the sun has given the clouds a distinct and beautiful hue
Canon EOS 5D Mark II, 17-40mm, 1/15sec at f/8, ISO 100, tripod, cable release, ND grad

3

HeliconSoft The **Reader Portfolio** winner chosen every week will receive a copy of **Helicon Focus Pro** innovative software worth $200. Visit www.heliconsoft.com

Helicon Focus is designed to merge several differently focused images into a fully focused one, thus allowing extreme depth of field. You can produce sharp images in one click, retouch results with special brushes and enjoy all the benefits of state-of-the-art technology to make your images stand out

Submit your images
Please see the 'Send us your pictures' section on page 3 for details or visit www.amateurphotographer.co.uk/portfolio

4

Martyn Ferry, Oxfordshire

Martyn's love of photography found him working professionally in the commercial field for a number of years before moving away from it completely. It was only after discovering his passion for the British countryside that Martyn picked up his camera with earnest, and embarked on a renaissance. Visit www.martynferryphotography.com.

Red Poppies

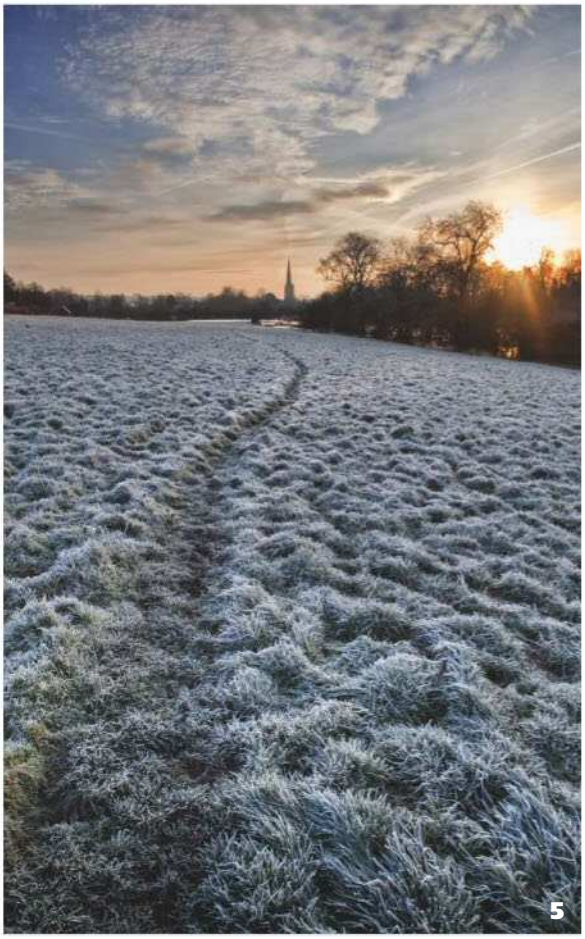
3 Here we have a beautiful contrast between the bruised, moody sky and the vibrant spread of poppies
Canon EOS 5D Mark II, 17-40mm, 1/320sec at f/11, ISO 100, tripod, cable release, 0.9 ND grad

Looking Towards Burford

4 There's a classic feel to this image. It could easily have been the scene for a painting
Canon EOS 5D Mark II, 17-40mm, 1/125sec at f/8, ISO 100, tripod, cable release, polariser

Frosty Path

5 This is a blend of two shots. One has retained the detail in the sky, while the other features the frosty grass
Canon EOS 5D Mark II, 24-105mm, 1/10sec at f/10, ISO 100, tripod, 0.9 ND grad



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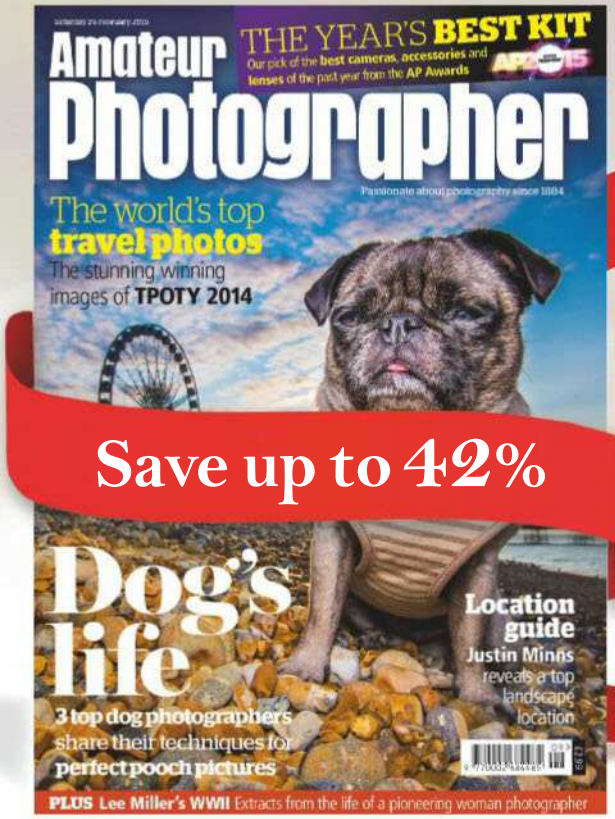

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Round 3
(50 points)

ALL PICTURES © LEE ACASTER

Ahead of the curve

Lee Acaster is 2015's Amateur Photographer of the Year. He wins a Sigma SD1 Merrill and 17-50mm f/2.8 EX DC HSM lens worth more than £2,000. **Oliver Atwell** talks to him

How does it feel to have won APOY 2015?
I'm absolutely thrilled. As a keen reader of the magazine, I've seen the standard of the work of previous winners and it's a real honour to be among them. I've never entered APOY before, but thought I would give it a go. I had very little expectation of doing well, so when I was lucky enough to finish in the top 10 for the first round I was very surprised. I stupidly sent my second round entry to the wrong email address, but then when I won the third round it all started getting rather exciting.

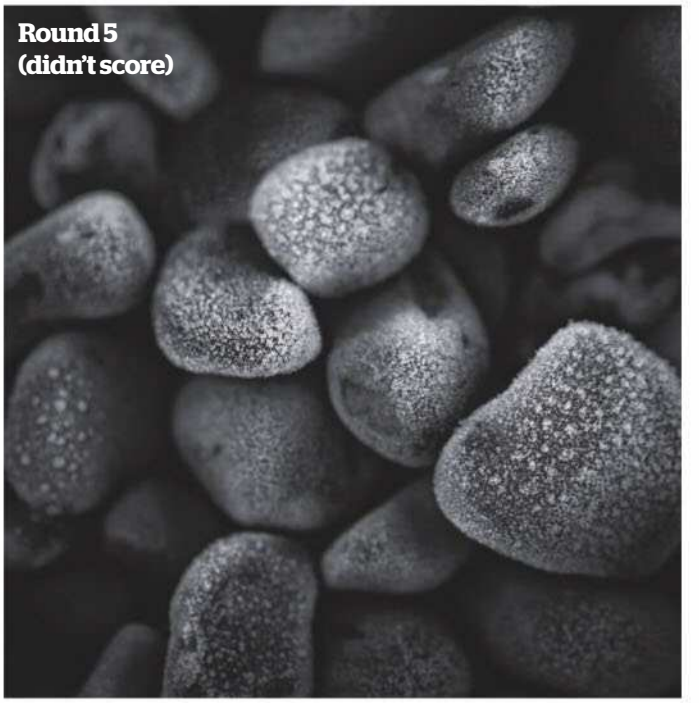
It's probably a difficult question to answer, but do you think there's a secret to winning competitions?
I've been very lucky to have quite a few successes in competitions so far, but I don't think there's any magic formula. It may sound a little clichéd, but I really think it's important to shoot images that please yourself first and foremost. If you like them, there's a good chance somebody else will. Then, if you're fortunate, the competition judges may, too.

What's the key to developing a strong eye for photography?
I've always had a love of nature, the landscape, and in particular light. Even before I took up photography as a serious hobby when I moved to East Anglia, I would always notice changes in light – like trees illuminated against a dark sky after heavy rain – and would often go out in the garden or for a walk just to soak up that atmosphere. The more you are aware of your surroundings, the more potential images start to make themselves known to you. It's easy to see potential shots when you're at a breathtaking location or landmark, but there are more unusual and intimate images to be had all around. The more you look for them, the more you see them.

Round 8
(didn't score)

Round 2
(didn't score)

Round 1
(44 points)


Round 5
(didn't score)

Round 7
(42 points)

You're known primarily as a landscape photographer, so what qualities in particular do you look for in a landscape?
Living in East Anglia, we aren't really blessed with sweeping vistas or mountainous backdrops, so the sky often becomes very important in my images. Fortunately, that's one thing we have in abundance! I'm a big fan of unusual and unsettling images, and I often look for something that suggests a story, rather than just a pretty scene (although I'm not averse to those, either), so an unusual building or feature will often draw me as a starting point for a photograph.

Why the fascination with minimalism? What does that bring to an image?
By emptying an image of unnecessary detail, it becomes much easier to direct the viewer. I spend a lot of my time framing in a way that focuses on the parts of the image that are important to me, and this means excluding anything that distracts from that. I try to use lead-in lines, and light in much the same way, to pull the eye into the key parts of the shot.

Why did you decide to go in the opposite direction to the current trend of colour-saturated images?
The temptation is always to boost saturation, especially in the digital age of Instagram and Facebook. There's no denying it gives an immediate impact, but I think images tend to have much more longevity if processed with a little more subtlety. I print a lot of my images, which has many benefits. It gives a real sense of satisfaction and completion to print an image, rather than just letting it disappear into the depths of your hard drive. But it's rare to make a print and then think, 'I wish I had increased the saturation.'

What's your most important kit?
I have a tendency to take too much with me most of the time, as my back will testify, but the must-have items would be my Lee Filters kit and a tripod. Although I put work into processing images, I like to get it as close as possible to the final result in-camera, and graduated ND filters are essential for that. I almost always have a circular polariser attached to my lens – I can't overstate its benefits. Many photographers think these are mainly used for making blue skies punchy, but in fact I rarely use them for that purpose. They're invaluable for cutting out reflections on foliage, rocks and watery surfaces, and can add more richness to your shots.

I rarely use autofocus – in fact, most of my lenses are manual-focus only, so a tripod is a necessity. The advantage is that it slows me down and makes me consider composition carefully. I usually spend a while examining the live view before taking a shot, adjusting my position and framing to make sure everything is just as I want.

'Most of my images take their inspiration from the low-lying beauty of the East Anglian landscape,' says Lee. 'I strive to add my own interpretation and a little drama.' Lee's awards include: **British Wildlife Photography Awards 2014 Overall winner; Wex Photographer of the Year 2014, overall winner; Landscape Photographer of the Year 2014, commended; Outdoor Photographer of the Year 2014, commended; Amateur Photographer of the Year 2015, overall winner**. Visit **www.leeacaster.com** and **facebook.com/landscapeandlight**

APOY 2015 Amateur Photographer OF THE YEAR COMPETITION

Lee's image placements in **APOY 2015**

Round 1 Night Life
Seventh place

Round 2 Going Abstract
Didn't score

Round 3 Wider Perspective First place

Round 4 In Focus
Second place

Round 5 Up Close
Disqualified

Round 6 On the Street
Didn't score

Round 7 Lie of the Land
Tenth place

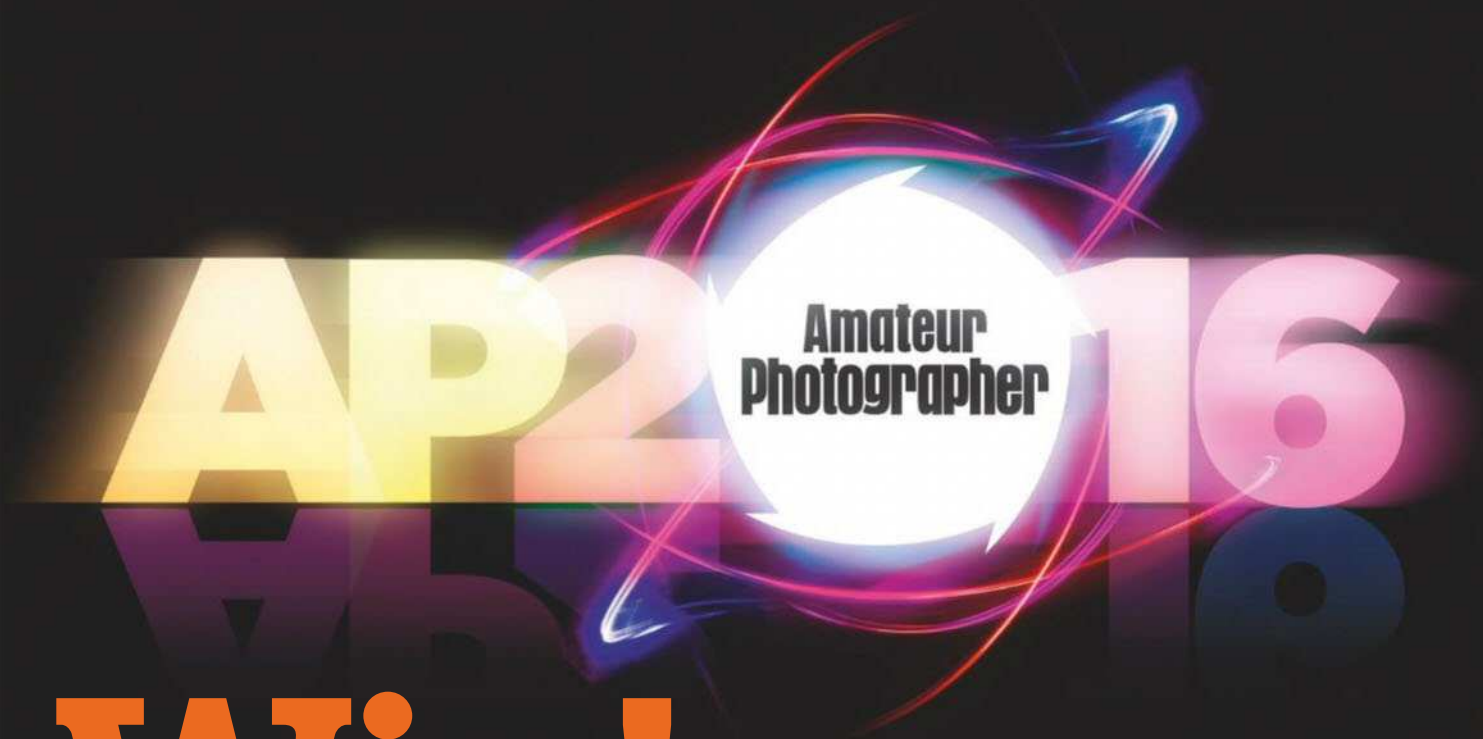
Round 8 Shades of Grey
Didn't score

APOY 2016

We'll be publishing details, including themes and closing dates for **APOY 2016**, in AP 5 March 2016. We have Sigma prizes for the overall winner, plus eight monthly prizes for first placed entrants. Details will also be published on our website in March at **www.amateurphotographer.co.uk**

Round 6 (didn't score)

Round 4 (49 points)



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One of our favourite awards is the Amateur Photographer Reader Product of the Year Award. All AP readers have the chance to nominate the piece of photographic equipment they feel has stood out over the past year. This can be any piece of photographic equipment, launched in 2015, that you think is particularly great or innovative in some way. And this year has seen a wealth of new cameras, lenses and accessories and some real innovation in technology.

The final results will be announced at our annual awards event to be held in London, and online on 4 February 2016.

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LOCATION GUIDE

Kimmeridge Bay

Sitting along the Jurassic Coast, this bay has plenty to offer the landscape photographer, as **Jeremy Walker** explains

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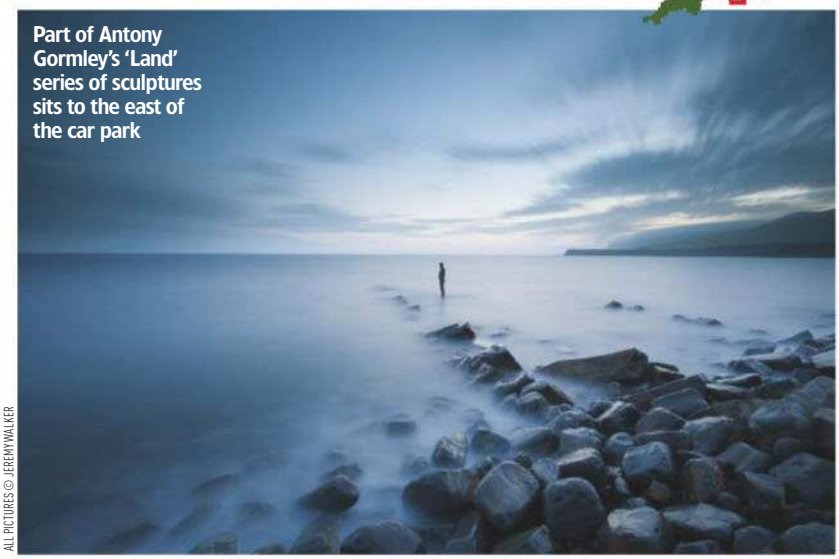


Part of Antony Gormley's 'Land' series of sculptures sits to the east of the car park

Try to shoot during an incoming tide so you can stand on dry rocks

ALL PICTURES © JEREMY WALKER

KIMMERIDGE Bay is situated on the Isle of Purbeck at the heart of Dorset's Jurassic Coast and about three and a half miles south of Wareham and five miles west of Swanage Bay. It is easily accessible by road, although you will have to pay a toll (currently £5 for a car) as this is private land.

Famous for its geography, geology and fossils, the bay is approached through the village of Kimmeridge on a dead-end road. Currently a Jurassic Coast and fossil museum is being built in the village. The roads in this area can be narrow and winding so care should be taken, especially in the busier summer months.

Kimmeridge beach is pebbly, but the main attraction is the rock ledges that protrude into the sea for about 200 metres. Captured with the correct tide and technique, they make for interesting subject matter.

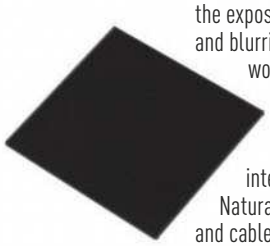
Many photographers will get no further than the first rock ledge, which is a shame as further around the bay the pebbles give way to rock that has the look and texture of elephant hide. Skirting further west around the bay and past the red military-range sign (if the flag is flying, go no further) there are some very interesting rock formations, which also make for good locations. To the east of the car park there are a few huts as well as a launch ramp for boats.

Jeremy Walker

Jeremy is an award winning professional photographer with many years' experience specialising in high quality landscape and location photography from around the world.

www.jeremywalker.co.uk

KIT LIST



Filters

Filters for increasing the exposure length and blurring the water would certainly be advantageous. Try the Lee Filters Big Stopper for some interesting effects. Naturally, a sturdy tripod and cable release are musts.

Footwear

Good footwear is essential. Investing in a decent pair of neoprene lined wellies is just about the best thing you can do, as there is a strong probability that you'll get your feet wet.

Backpack

A rucksack style kit bag is the best to use in these conditions. Take out the kit you need and keep the bag on your back. Getting distracted by your location and shot is easily done you don't want to turn around to find seawater lapping at your bag.

Kimmeridge beach is famous for its rock ledges that protrude into the sea for about 200 metres

Shooting advice

Time to visit

Kimmeridge Bay can be photographed at any time of year. However, I would avoid the summer for two reasons – there will be too many people around, and the sun rises and sets in the wrong place. This is a south-facing coast and the best time of year to shoot it is in winter, when you'll be facing into the sunset, especially during mid-December on or around the shortest day.

Not only do you want the right weather, but you'll also want the right tide. Kimmeridge Bay is one of those strange places that experiences a double tide due to its position on the English Channel. Check the tide times and then check them again. I prefer to work with an incoming tide, as it's easier to anticipate where the water will be, how much time you have to make your shot and hopefully give you a dry exit route. Patience is a virtue and there will no doubt be a lot of hanging around in what is quite an open, unprotected space. Warm windproof clothing will make life a little more tolerable.

Food and lodging

In Kimmeridge village there is a fantastic café and restaurant called Clavells. Hot food, lunches and afternoon teas are available. My top tip is to have a bite to eat and then head out to the bay. They may have finished charging for the car park by late afternoon as well.

There is plenty of accommodation locally – everything from bed and breakfasts to luxury hotels. Try the Springfield Country Hotel at Stoborough for a hotel close to lots of good locations, or for something extra special try The Priory in Wareham.

When Harry met...

Robin Williams

Harry Borden remembers a tense, but ultimately productive portrait shoot with actor **Robin Williams**

While I was on a trip to New York in 1999, showing my work to magazines there, I had a call from *The Observer Magazine*. I'd been shooting portraits for the magazine for a few years. This time I was offered the opportunity to photograph Robin Williams, who was promoting his latest film. The only catch was that I had to photograph him the next day at the Dorchester Hotel in London.

Following a string of roles in films such as *Dead Poets Society*, *Good Will Hunting* and *Good Morning, Vietnam*, Williams was a major star and this was an exciting offer. So I cut short my trip, booked the earliest available flight from the US and arrived in London the next morning. There, I met up with my colleague, journalist William Leith. *The Observer* told us we would have an hour for the interview and half an hour for pictures.

However, when we arrived at the Dorchester, Williams' tough female publicist said, 'You have half an hour for the interview and five minutes for pictures – if we have time.' While taking in this news, we were led into Williams' hotel room that was full of people. Williams had a big entourage, including a scary minder who was completely lacking in any warmth or sense of humour. The entire atmosphere felt rather intimidating.

After the interview, I started shooting portraits. I was using a Hasselblad CM, a medium-format film camera. The lighting in the room was poor so I used a big Bowens ring flash. It had a massive battery pack, which was heavy. However, it meant that even though I was using a fine-grain black & white film (Agfapan 25 APX), the flash was so powerful I could still shoot at f/16.

Although time was really limited, as I was trying to shoot the portraits Williams talked constantly. While I was being hurried along, he was doing his shtick and trying to entertain everyone in the room. I found it really irritating. He could have said, 'Give this guy a break and let him do his job,' but he just shrugged his shoulders as if it was nothing to do with him and let other people be nasty on his behalf. So I had to persevere.

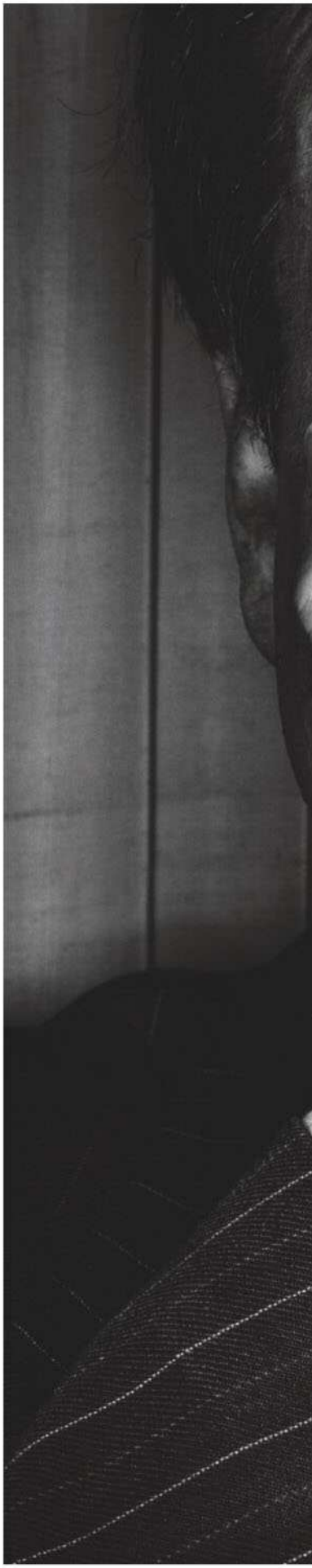
As a passive-aggressive way of telling him to shut up, I asked him to put his hand over his mouth. It was also a way of getting his very hairy hands in the picture, which I'd first noticed years before when he acted in *Mork & Mindy*. I got one frame of him in that position, then he put his hand down. This was the most interesting image from the few rolls of film I managed to shoot. You can see the use of the ring flash by those distinctive 'doughnut' shapes reflected in his eyes.

In that kind of situation, where I have very little time, I usually keep taking pictures for as long as I can. However, in this case it was starting to annoy the people in the entourage and further sour the atmosphere. When I took out my Leica and took a couple of reportage-style shots, tempers started to fray. The minder threatened to throw me out of the window if I didn't stop and the shoot came to an abrupt end. I had rapidly shot four 12-shot rolls – two black & white and two colour.

Months afterwards, a photographic paper manufacturer was publishing a book and wanted to feature my pictures to showcase the different type of papers it produced. The company wanted to use pictures of people including Martin Scorsese and Kate Beckinsale, and everyone gave their approval for their portraits to be used. However, when my agent approached Robin Williams' agent to request the use of the 'hand-over-the-mouth' picture, Williams wouldn't give his approval. Even though it was long after the stresses and strains of doing the film publicity interviews, he still wasn't prepared to help me out.

When he died last year, he was lionised as a warm and wonderful human being, but in my experience he was more complicated than that. However, even though my portrait of him was taken in a brief, frenzied and ultimately unhappy shoot, it's still one of my favourites.

As told to David Clark



© HARRY BORDEN

USING RING FLASH

I MAINLY tended to use ring flash earlier in my career, when I didn't get much time or space to work with my subjects. Using ring flash gives a nice even light for portraits and can look quite dramatic, but I now see it as a bit of a cheap trick and much prefer to use natural light. Occasionally I'll still use a Profoto ring flash if I'm shooting in a location where there isn't much natural light, or if I need to get a picture quickly. Ring flash works particularly well if the backdrop is reflective in any way.

Harry Borden

Harry is one of the UK's finest portrait photographers and his work has been widely published. He has won prizes at the World Press Photo awards (1997 and 1999), and last year was awarded an Honorary Fellowship by the RPS. The National Portrait Gallery collection holds more than 100 of his images. Visit **www.harryborden.co.uk**

Accessories

Useful gadgets to enhance your photography, from phones to filters...

Manfrotto Off Road Hiker 30L

● £124 ● www.manfrotto.co.uk

Callum McInerney-Riley tests a large outdoor backpack with a removable camera module

At a glance

- Backpack specifically designed for hiking
- Includes padded camera module and separate space for other items
- Air mesh padding on back
- Fits DSLR kit
- Comes with waterproof rain protector

MANFROTTO has a host of products aimed at the outdoor and hiking market, including the Manfrotto Off Road Hiker 30L. The bottom of the bag features a padded, removable camera module that takes up just under half the space available, with a zip on the side for easy access to your kit without needing to go through the top. I found the module was large enough to comfortably house a Canon EOS 5D Mark III with Canon EF 100-400mm f/4.5-5.6L IS attached, as well as two large primes. Internal dividers can also be adjusted to house any kit up to that size. There's also ample space for storing any hiking essentials above the camera module. The areas are separated by thick material, but this can be unzipped and the camera module removed.

The Off Road Hiker 30L is very large and likely to be heavy when fully packed. For this reason, there's an adjustable padded waist belt and additional padding in the lower-back area.

Verdict

I used the Off Road Hiker 30L to carry some very heavy kit for a couple of miles. I found it to be very comfortable – it offered a great deal of support and didn't cause any discomfort. While I don't think it will replace my day-to-day kit bag, it serves its purpose well. For those who need a dual-purpose hiking bag that can be used with or without camera kit, it's excellent.

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ALSO CONSIDER

Lowepro Photo Sport BP 300 AW II
£147, www.lowepro.co.uk
The Photo Sport has a similar sized camera module, with plenty of space for other items in the top sections. It also has a dedicated space for a hydration pack.

Nest Explorer 300L Backpack
£129.99, www.nest-style.com
The Nest Explorer is available in four colours. While it houses a smaller camera kit than the Manfrotto Off Road, it boasts a laptop pouch at the back, a tripod holder and plenty of space throughout.

Crumpler Toploader 400
£40, www.crumpler.eu
If you're only looking to house a small camera kit and already have a hiking backpack, the Toploader is perfect for carrying in your bag. It can also be worn around the waist for quick camera access.

Out now

Expert reviews of the latest kit to look out for

Merrell Intercept

● £95 ● www.merrell.com

A DECENT pair of shoes is essential when you're out shooting, not only to keep you comfortable, but also to provide a good level of grip. Dedicated walking boots can be a bit excessive for some occasions, which is where something like the Intercept from Merrell comes in. Available in 'moth brown' or 'smooth black', the upper is made from leather with a mesh liner and tongue. Comfort is the name of the game, with a moulded nylon arch shank insole and an air cushion in the heel to absorb shocks. For grip, there's a hard-wearing Vibram Axis Sole to deliver plenty of traction.

I've worn these shoes in a range of locations, from the hot and dusty Maasai Mara in Kenya, to rocky gorges in Crete and the blustery, wet Suffolk coast, and they've been great. Despite long days' wear, they've still been comfortable at the end of it, while the breathable lining with antimicrobial Aegis works wonders, preventing sweat build up. If you're looking for a versatile, grippy and most importantly, comfortable pair of multi-sport shoes, the Merrell Intercept ticks all the boxes. **Phil Hall**

Amateur Photographer Testbench GOLD ★★★★★

Leef iBridge iOS Micro SD Card Reader

● £34.99 ● www.leefco.com

IT CAN be all too easy to fill up the available memory on your iPad or iPhone while you're out taking pictures, but the Leef iBridge can help. The device slots into the Lightning connector port and, using the Leef Mobile Memory app, allows you to view images and some types of video on your iPhone or iPad. We managed to view photos and MP4 videos shot on a GoPro, but it must be noted that videos larger than 1920x1080 may stutter when played back. Stick to videos that have been sized and compressed for a mobile device and you'll be able to watch even full-feature films.

Of course, you can also transfer images and video from your iPhone or iPad to a MicroSD card, which should make it easy to free up significant space. I found that the iBridge worked well, and the unique curved design meant it was easy to hold securely without the risk of knocking it and damaging the connection on the iBridge or iPhone. A very neat device indeed. **Richard Sibley**

Amateur Photographer Testbench Recommended ★★★★

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Appraisal

Expert advice and tips on improving your photography from **Damien Demolder**

Naxi carriers, China

Brian Howson

Canon EOS 300D, 33mm, 1/200sec at f/11, ISO 400

BRIAN photographed these two women, of the Naxi ethnic group, while he was on holiday in the town of Lijiang in China. I can see why he stopped to take their picture, as they are a handsome pair, and their dress and environment make them visually arresting.

The picture, though, has the air of one taken quite quickly by someone who didn't want to be spotted, as the corner of the wall is leaning over and we're looking down on the women. The basket stands proudly in the foreground, as if it should be displaying its contents – but our attention is drawn only to the plastic.

I think we would feel more of a connection with the women had the picture been taken from a lower angle – such as from their head height. In that way, we would have felt comfortably among them, rather than looking down on them as if we were just passing by and not paying a great deal of attention.

Looking down is often an unsatisfactory angle, as we know from photographing children and pets – we really need to get down on a level with our subject to make a proper connection.

I can't recreate what shooting on their level would have looked like, but with the use of some transform tools I've altered the perspective a little, which hints at what the difference might have been.

I've also warmed up the shot a little, as the women appeared rather cold. Adding some yellow and red, and a general saturation boost, has brought out the colour in their faces.

I'm sure, had you crouched down to shoot them from their own height, Brian, they wouldn't have minded at all. If you're spotted, a friendly and appreciative smile works wonders.

Win! Send up to six prints, slides or images on CD (include the original files from the camera along with your versions on the CD). Tell us about the pictures and include details of equipment used and exposure settings. Send your images to *Appraisal* at the address on page 28. Enclose an SAE if you want them returned. The picture of the week will receive a year's digital subscription to AP worth £79.99

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Please see the 'Send us your pictures' section on page 3 for details or visit www.amateurphotographer.co.uk

Fisherman Emma Brown

Canon PowerShot S100, 5.2-26mm, 1/800sec at f/4.5, ISO 80

THIS is a very nice picture. I can't say that it's the first time I've seen this kind of photograph, but I really wouldn't have minded taking it myself. Emma, unlike Janet (below), has positioned herself perfectly so that her subject stands out clearly and is unhindered by the background. The hat, the man's arm and the netting work very well against that lovely orange sky, and the tonal difference between the body and the distant mountains is enough that we can see just what is going on. I love the man's pose, too – hanging on but leaning out over the prow of the boat *Titanic*-style, like some fishy Kate Winslet.

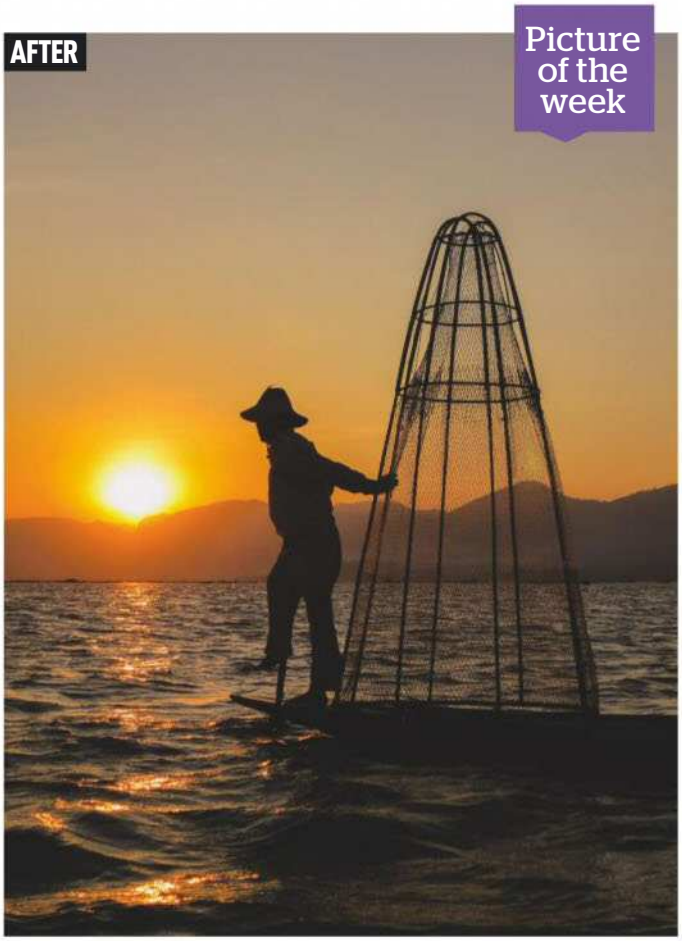
The light shining into the camera has left us with slightly less contrast than I would have liked, and I can't help thinking that there is too much detail in the man's form, which takes our attention away from the shapes of the semi-silhouette.

I've straightened the frame first, and then injected a little more midtone contrast to deepen the shadows and to draw out the colour of the sky – emphasising the sunset colours rather at the expense of the pale blues.

My changes are just details, as all the hard work was already done. Well done, Emma. You win the Picture of the Week award.

Right: The alterations bring out the orange sunset colours in the scene

Below: The horizon slopes slightly, and the blues are a little strong



Jumping girl at sunset Janet Cook

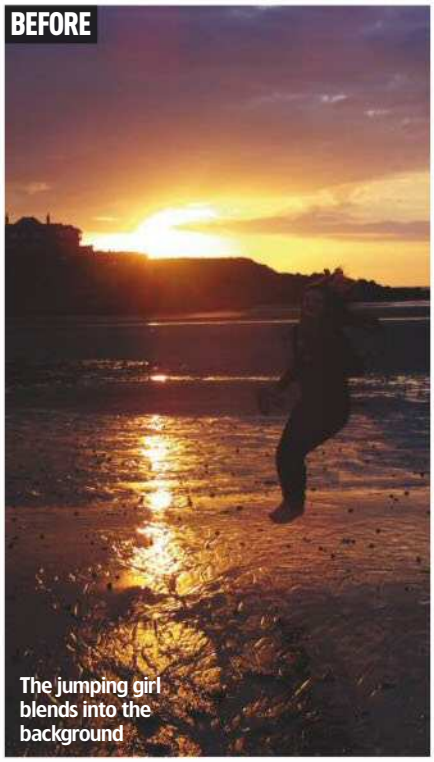
Sony Cyber-shot DSC-WX200, 12.1mm, 1/200sec at f/5, ISO 100

JUMPING for pictures has become such a craze that I fully expect in centuries to come historians will consider this as an age of magic and sorcery based on the study of our photo albums – not that we have photo albums any more, of course!

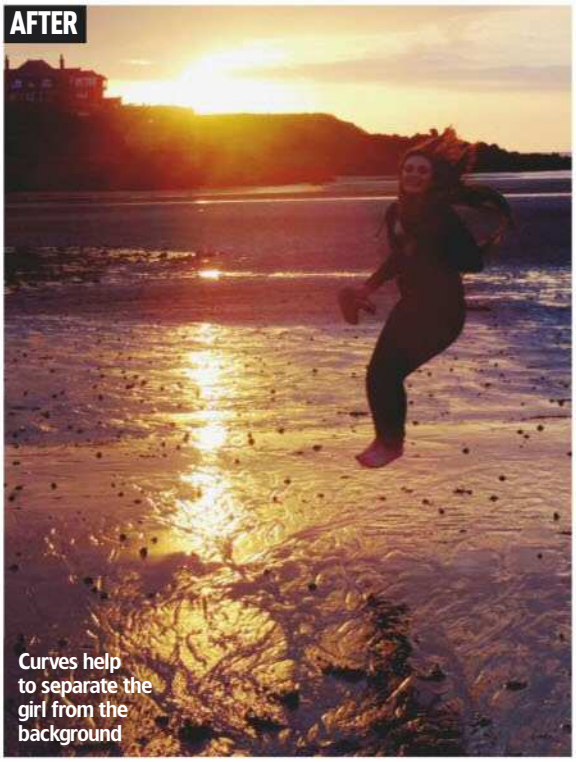
I'm not the greatest fan of the jumping phenomenon, but neither do I object to it. Janet's jumping girl is showing very good 'air' (I think the expression is) and she looks very jolly. The scene is certainly impressive, too, and we can all get the sense it was a nice place and time to be present.

The problem with this shot is that it's quite difficult to appreciate the height to which the girl has jumped, or even that there is a girl there at all, because she rather blends into the background. The tonal value of her top half is too close to that of the background, so instead of standing out, she's camouflaged.

There isn't too much that can be done at this stage, other than to attempt to separate the two using curves, but at the time Janet could have moved so that the jumping girl's background consisted of bright sea and sky – against which her outline would have been very clear.



The jumping girl blends into the background



Curves help to separate the girl from the background

Damien Demolder is a photographer, journalist and photographic equipment expert, speaker, judge and educator. He has worked in the photographic publishing industry for 17 years, including 15 years at *Amateur Photographer*. He uses a wide range of equipment, from wooden plate cameras to the latest DSLRs, and is a great fan of all products that make good photography more accessible to more people

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At a glance

- 24-million-pixel full-frame CMOS sensor
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- 4.4-million-dot 'EyeRes' EVF
- Leica L mount
- 11fps continuous shooting
- 4K video at 30fps
- £5,050 (body only)

Leica SL (Typ 601)

It may push the definition of 'compact' to its limit, but Leica's top-end CSC has some outstanding features that set it apart from the rest, as **Andy Westlake** discovers

For and against

- ➕ Extraordinary electronic viewfinder
- ➕ Excellent image quality
- ➕ Internal 4K video recording
- ➖ Large, heavy body
- ➖ Unintuitive controls with poor default set up
- ➖ Limited native lens range

Where in the range

Leica S (Typ 007)

Price £12,800 (body only)

Leica's professional medium format DSLR uses a 37.5MP 30x45mm CMOS Pro Format sensor, and has a similar design to the SL

Leica T (Typ 701)

Price £1,239 (body only)

With the same L mount as the SL, but a 16.3MP APS C CMOS sensor, the T is a touchscreen based CSC for style conscious shooters

Data file

Sensor	24 million pixel full frame CMOS
Output size	6,000x4,000 pixels
Lens mount	Leica L
Focal-length mag	1x
Shutter speeds	60 1/8000sec + bulb
ISO	50 50,000
Exposure modes	PASM
Metering system	Multi field, spot, average
Exposure comp	±3EV in 1/3 steps
Drive mode	11fps max, 7fps with AF
LCD	3in, 1.04 million dot touchscreen
Viewfinder	4.4 million dot, 0.8x magnification
AF points	49 point contrast detection
Video	Cine 4K (4096x2,160) at 24fps
External mic	Via optional adapter
Memory card	SD, SDHC, SDXC (2 slots)
Power	BP SCL4 rechargeable Li ion
Battery life	Approx 400 shots
Dimensions	147x104x39mm
Weight	847g (with battery and card)

There's something about Leica that makes many photographers go slightly weak at the knees. It's a name that's indelibly associated with some of the greatest photographers of all time, including the likes of Annie Leibovitz, Robert Frank, and Henri Cartier-Bresson. The company's most iconic product line, its M-series rangefinders, is more than 60 years old, and took the seismic transition from film to digital in its stride while barely changing in design. Indeed, the current Leica M-P looks more or less the same as the 1954 M-3, while the Leica M-A is just about the last 'serious' 35mm film camera still available.

With all this nostalgia as a distraction, it can be easy to overlook another side of Leica that's emerged in recent years – that of a company aiming to

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Image detail is stunning; this shot is cropped from a portrait-format frame

provide unique tools for professional photographers (or perhaps ambitious enthusiasts with very accommodating bank managers). First were the S-series medium-format DSLRs, based around a 45x30mm Pro Format sensor, and now the company's SL (Typ 601) full-frame compact system camera.

Leica is only the second company to bring out a mirrorless model with a full-frame sensor, after Sony's groundbreaking Alpha 7 series, although logic dictates that it certainly won't be the last. The SL stretches the word 'compact' in the CSC acronym to breaking point, being as large and as heavy as the average full-frame DSLR. But it's also a heavyweight in terms of features, being blessed with 11 frames per second continuous shooting, internal 4K video recording and an extraordinary 4.4-million-dot electronic viewfinder, which is easily the best we've yet seen on a stills camera.

All this cutting-edge technology might seem alien for Leica, and we rather suspect that the company has spent a lot of time recently picking the brains of its long-time collaborator Panasonic. But no matter where all this know-how comes from, one thing is clear – the SL is a serious proposition. Let's take a closer look at what it offers.

Features

Usually the first thing we examine with any camera is the sensor, and Leica has opted for a 24-million-pixel full-frame CMOS unit. This does without an optical low-pass filter to maximise acuity, but clearly the SL is still some way behind the latest high-resolution models such as the 50.6MP Canon EOS 5DS R, 42.4MP Sony Alpha 7R II or 36MP Nikon D810. However, Leica is keen to stress that pixel count isn't the be-all and end-all of image quality, and that the excellence of its lenses should at least partially close the gap. It's also probably worth pointing out that 24MP is easily sufficient to give highly detailed 24x16in/A2 prints, although higher pixel counts do offer more scope for cropping.

Paired with Leica's Maestro II image processor, the sensor delivers a standard sensitivity range of ISO 50-50,000. Raw files are recorded as 14-bit DNGs for maximal tonal gradation and easy processing. Continuous shooting is available at a hugely impressive 11 frames per second, with focus and exposure fixed at the start of the burst, dropping to 7fps with live view, autofocus and autoexposure adjustment between frames. Buffering is very respectable, with up to 30 raw frames or 70 JPEGs recordable before the camera starts to slow down.

The sensor sits behind the L-mount, which is physically the same as that used in the Leica T. It's an all-electronic, four-pronged bayonet, which Leica says was designed with full frame in mind from the start. It's noticeably larger in diameter than the Sony E-mount used by the Alpha 7 series, giving more space around the full-frame sensor, especially at its corners.

Timed shutter speeds range from 60secs-1/8000sec, with up to 30 minutes available in bulb mode, and a very respectable flash sync of 1/250sec. The shutter is pretty quiet, and the combination of 1/8000sec shutter and ISO 50 allows for shooting at large apertures in bright light. Dual SD card slots are used for storage, and the camera can

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either record files in duplicate to both cards simultaneously, or switch to using the second when the first is full. Unusually, one slot accepts UHS-II cards, which have a second set of pins for dramatically faster write speeds. This is worth knowing as it can take nearly 90secs to write a full burst of raw files to a conventional SDHC card.

Leica has included an intelligent Auto ISO function that allows you either to set a fixed minimum shutter speed, or specify that this should adjust to match the focal length of the lens in use. Auto ISO can also be used in manual-exposure mode, allowing you to choose the shutter speed and aperture to suit the subject and let the camera adjust the ISO to compensate for changing light; this can be combined with exposure compensation to adjust the image brightness. One neat touch is Floating ISO, where the camera will adjust the ISO purely to compensate for any change in maximum aperture on zooming the lens when shooting wide open.

Aside from the basics, though, the SL has few additional options. There are programmable intervalometer and autobracketing modes, with the latter including the ability to make a high dynamic range JPEG file in-camera. But there's no space for such fripperies as art filters, panoramic shooting or a multiple-exposure mode. With this in mind, it may come as a surprise to find both Wi-Fi and GPS built in, but Leica considers both to be genuinely useful tools for serious photographers – and I agree.

Where the SL gets particularly interesting, though, is with regards to video recording; it can record 4K video at 30fps using a Super-35 crop of the sensor. As this is a similar area to APS-C, it will work with lenses designed for the Leica T, allowing true wideangle shooting. The camera allows 4K footage to be recorded internally to SD cards in 4:2:0 8-bit mode, or to an external recorder over HDMI in 4:2:2 10-bit mode. Alternatively, full HD video can be recorded at up to 120fps. A dedicated live view mode shows a 16:9 cropped view, with optional focus peaking and zebra-pattern overexposure-warning displays. Slightly disappointingly, though, microphone or headphone sockets can only be added via an adapter that plugs into the camera's proprietary multi-connector socket.

In this shot, exposing to retain highlight details gives blocked-up shadows

Lots of shadow detail can be pulled up by processing in Adobe Camera Raw

Viewfinder and screen

If there's one thing Leica really has got absolutely right with the SL, it's the viewfinder. Its 4.4-million-dot EyeRes finder gives exceptional detail, and a larger view than the optical finders on even top-of-the-range full-frame DSLRs. Its 60fps refresh rate means there's barely any lag, either. In addition to this, it can display a wide range of exposure information, overlay your choice of gridlines and even display electronic levels. The net result isn't just the most impressive electronic viewfinder yet, but it's probably the finest viewfinder on any full-frame camera to date, surpassing even the best optical finders such as that on the Canon EOS 5DS R.

The EVF is backed up by a 3in, 1.04-million-dot rear screen that also gives a bright, detailed view. It's touch-sensitive, which means it can be used to select the focus point and change certain settings, including ISO and exposure compensation. An eye sensor allows the camera to switch seamlessly between the two viewing methods during shooting. It's just a pity that the LCD isn't articulated in any way, which is a disadvantage compared to the tilting screen on the Sony Alpha 7R II.

Build and handling

There's no getting away from the fact that the SL is a big, heavy camera, especially with its SL 24-90mm f/2.8-4 lens attached. Indeed, it's as large as full-frame DSLRs such as the Nikon D810 or Canon EOS 5DS R fitted with their 24-70mm f/2.8 zooms. Its build quality appears faultless – the dust and splash-resistant

Lens compatibility

PERHAPS the biggest drawback to the SL, as it stands, lies in the native L-mount lens range. I tested it using the £3,150 Vario-Elmarit-SL 24-90mm f/2.8-4 Asph, which is optically superb and works very well, but is the only autofocus full-frame lens currently available from Leica. Two additional optics are promised during the course of 2016 – a 90-280mm f/2.8-4 and a 50mm f/1.4 – and Leica says it will keep its lens roadmap updated about a year in advance. However, it will clearly take a while before a proper system is available. Existing APS-C-format lenses for the Leica T can also be used directly, but will only give 10.7MP images from a central 1.5x crop of the sensor.

The saving grace is that, like other mirrorless cameras, the SL will work quite happily with a huge range of manual-focus lenses via mount adapters. Most notably, any Leica M-mount rangefinder lens can be used via the existing M-adapter-T, and Leica claims the sensor design means that the SL will give image quality with them that's second only to the M (Typ 240) itself.

Leica also intends to make adapters for R-mount and S-mount SLR lenses, as well as for PL-mount cine lenses. The idea is that by the end of next year, the SL will be able to use practically every lens that Leica has ever made. Chances are that third-party adapter makers will also start to pay a bit more attention to the L-mount than they have to date.

The SL can be used with Leica's M-mount lenses

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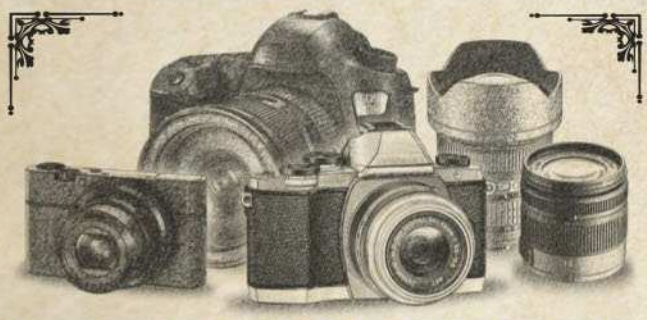

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Effective image stabilisation allowed me to handhold at 62mm and 1/6sec

body is machined from two solid blocks of aluminium alloy, and feels totally rigid in your hand. It should shrug off the abuse of daily professional use with ease.

Its matt-black paint finish, square edges, cross-hatched rubberised coating and minimalist controls all combine to give the SL a unique, and very modern, look. I suspect as many people will hate the design as love it, but there's certainly no risk of it being mistaken for an identikit DSLR. Personally, though, I find the chunky handgrip to be less comfortable than the more sculpted grips on its competitors.

Handling is also decidedly unconventional. Where the aforementioned DSLRs are festooned with buttons and dials to give direct access to every imaginable setting, Leica has adopted a pared-down, minimalist approach that makes do with two dials, a joystick controller and just nine buttons (including the shutter). Apart from the shutter release and video start/stop control, the buttons are all dual function; tapping them does one thing, but holding them briefly down does another. These second functions are all user-customisable, but you have to memorise what each is set to, as the buttons are completely unmarked. It's a scheme borrowed from the S-series DSLRs that Leica says is well liked by its users. However, I do wonder how many other potential buyers it will put off.

The top dial controls the shutter speed, while the rear dial sets the aperture; clicking the latter inwards and spinning it switches through the usual quartet of exposure modes (program, aperture priority, shutter priority and manual). The multi-controller joystick on the camera's back is used to move the focus area around the frame; pushing it inwards activates AF, even when the camera is set to manual focus, which can be handy for quickly acquiring focus.

A top-plate button with a red dot in its centre is dedicated to starting and stopping video recording, while the silver button beside it switches the camera between stills and video modes. Unusually, in video mode you can't shoot stills at all, leaving the shutter button completely unresponsive.

On the front plate are two buttons – one to release the lens and another that cycles through various preview modes. It's possible to view the image at a standard brightness to give an SLR-like experience, or apply exposure simulation to pre-visualise the effects of your settings. Alongside conventional depth of field preview there's also a Panasonic-like shutter-speed-simulation option. Anyone coming to the camera for the first time, though, is likely to find themselves trying to release the lens by pushing the preview button, and vice versa, as their respective physical designs are rather counterintuitive.

Perhaps the biggest problem with the SL, though, is that while the buttons are arranged very stylishly around the camera body, only a few are easy to press with the camera to your eye. This is compounded by a poor default set-up that conspicuously fails to assign the most used functions to the most accessible buttons. Exposure compensation is assigned to the left-side button behind the top dial, and ISO to the button top-left of the LCD; both are unreachable without a significant change of grip. However, I re-assigned these settings to the two buttons on the right side of the screen, which are both

Focal points

With its large, chunky body, the Leica SL has a unique and very modern look

Connectors
A rubberised cover on the camera's side hides USB 3.0, full size HDMI and PC sync sockets, along with a proprietary multi connector.

Battery
With a 400 shots per charge rating, the BP SCL4 slots neatly into the camera's base plate with no need for a covering door.

External light meter
This is used to help determine exposure settings when M mount lenses are used with the M Adapter T.

This image was shot at ISO 10,000 and still shows impressive control of noise

easily reached by your right thumb, and found that when set up like this the SL worked well.

Unusually, I didn't find the touchscreen to be very useful while shooting, mainly because I was working with the EVF all the time and only a few shooting settings have been given a touch interface anyway. The screen can at least be used to browse through images in playback, although it isn't as responsive with this as it could be.

Autofocus

Leica has made very bold claims about the SL's autofocus, saying it's the world's fastest in any full-frame camera, and while this should be taken with a pinch of salt I had few complaints in real-world use. In fact, the autofocus behaves much as I'd expect from a modern contrast-detection system; it's very fast, essentially silent and near 100% accurate. It also works well in low light, so long as you pay attention to where you place the focus area (which is made very easy by the SL's joystick controller).

Manual focusing is a breeze, too, due to the huge clear viewfinder and optional focus-peaking display. For the most accurate focusing, live-view magnification can also be engaged in two steps, by tapping the button lower left of the LCD. This is a bit awkward when shooting with the heavy 24-90mm kit zoom, but it should be less of a problem for those using manual-focus lenses via a mount adapter.

Performance

In practical use, the SL performs very well. With no anti-aliasing filter, the sensor is capable of recording loads of detail, and its impressive noise performance means that sensitivities up to ISO 12,500 are quite usable. Metering tends to be accurate, and it's easy to preview the effects of your exposure settings in the viewfinder and apply any necessary changes before even taking a shot.

I was a little disappointed by the camera's JPEG output, which gives muted colours and white balance that errs to the cool side. To be fair, though, I'd expect almost everyone using this camera to be shooting raw, and the DNG output means you can get to work straight away with the software of your choice. Indeed, the raw files are impressively malleable, with lots of scope for pulling detail from deep shadows at low ISOs.

Currently, the Vario-Elmarit-SL 24-90mm f/2.8-4 Asph is the only autofocus full-frame lens that can be used on the SL, and will therefore be a major determinant of its image quality for most early adopters. Fortunately, it's exceptional, as we'd expect given its price tag. It's superbly sharp, with minimal chromatic aberration or vignetting.

Close examination of raw files shows that Leica has adopted a thoroughly modern approach of allowing more barrel distortion at wideangle than would be acceptable from a DSLR lens and compensating automatically in software, which allows other image-degrading aberrations to be corrected more thoroughly. The result is a lens that's as sharp wide open as it is stopped down to f/8, no matter what focal length you use. The zoom range also extends very usefully into the short telephoto 'portrait' realm, where conventional 24-70mm zooms come up a little short. AP

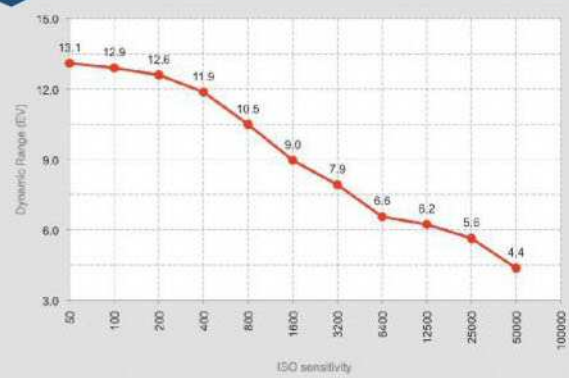
Lab results

Andrew Sydenham's lab tests reveal just how the camera performs

Leica has fitted the SL with a 24-million-pixel full-frame CMOS sensor, which it says is related to that inside the Leica Q (Typ 116) full-frame compact, and is not the Sony unit used in several other full-frame cameras. Specifically, the design of its pixels means that they can accept incoming light from more acute angles, which according to Leica means it should be less prone to the colour shading and corner smearing that can be seen when shooting with certain M-mount wideangle lenses.

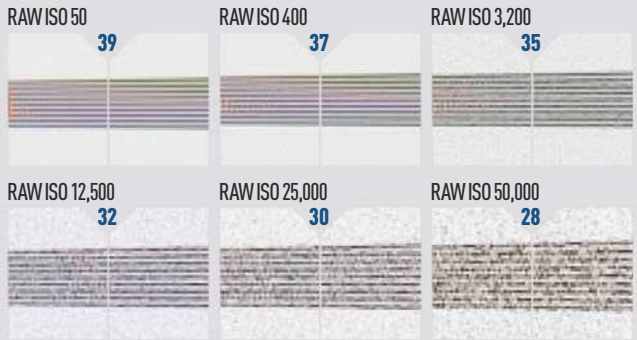
With no low-pass filter, the sensor resolves a lot of detail, although this means it can occasionally be prone to giving image artefacts in return. As we'd expect from a modern full-frame sensor, low ISO dynamic range is very high, and high ISO noise performance very commendable, too.

Dynamic range



At low ISOs of 50 200, the SL gives an impressively high dynamic range of 12.5EV or more in our Applied Imaging tests, indicating that raw files should offer significant scope for manipulation and recovering shadow detail in particular. Beyond ISO 400, it starts to fall more rapidly, and by the time we get beyond ISO 3,200 it's rather low, indicating that at this point noise will start to have a more serious impact on detail. At ISOs 25,000 and 50,000 we see very low readings, suggesting these settings should be avoided.

Resolution



With a measured resolution at ISO 50 of almost 4,000l/ph, the SL gets about as much out of its 24 million pixel sensor as theoretically possible. This also confirms that the 24 90mm zoom is impressively sharp; we shot these tests at 50mm and f/5.6. Stepping up through the ISO range sees resolution slowly diminish due to the effects of noise, but it's still around 3,600l/ph at ISO 1,600, and 3,400l/ph at ISO 6,400. Beyond this, things take a turn for the worse, with noise limiting resolution to 2,800l/ph at the highest setting.

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Noise

Both raw and JPEG images taken from our diorama scene are captured at the full range of ISO settings. The camera is placed in its default setting for JPEG images. Raw images are sharpened and noise reduction applied, to strike the best balance between resolution and noise.

RAW ISO 50

RAW ISO 400

RAW ISO 3,200

RAW ISO 12,500

RAW ISO 25,000

RAW ISO 50,000

With beautifully clean and detailed images, the Leica SL gives excellent results at low ISO settings. In normally processed images, it maintains near indistinguishable image quality at ISO 1,600, with just a little noise creeping into shadow regions if you examine images very closely at the pixel level. ISO 3,200, however, is still very good indeed, and it's only at ISO 6,400 that fine details start to get visibly blurred by the impact of noise. Step up to ISO 12,500, though, and things start to deteriorate more quickly; low frequency colour botching is detectable in shadow regions, and fine low contrast detail is beginning to get overwhelmed by noise. Even so, this setting should be acceptable for small prints or web use. The top two sensitivities, in contrast, really aren't very good at all, and should be reserved for situations where there's no other option.

The competition

Canon EOS 5DS R

Sensor: 50.6MP full frame CMOS

Price: £3,200 body only

ISO: 50–12,800 (extended)

Currently the highest resolution full frame camera available, the Canon EOS 5DS R combines excellent ergonomics, a fine sensor and superb AF and metering to make it one of the most complete DSLRs we've ever seen.

Sony Alpha 7R II

Sensor: 42.4MP full frame CMOS

Price: £2,600 body only

ISO: 50–102,400 (extended)

With its advanced 42.4MP BSI CMOS full frame sensor that includes on-chip phase detection autofocus, in-body image stabilisation and 2.36 million dot EVF, the A7R II is a technological tour de force.

Nikon D810

Sensor: 36.3MP full frame CMOS

Price: £2,350 body only

ISO: 32–51,200 (extended)

Nikon's high resolution full frame DSLR is a superb all-rounder, with refined handling and stunning image quality. Highlight weighted metering is designed to make best use of the 36.3MP sensor's huge dynamic range.

Our verdict

FROM the moment you set eyes on the Leica SL, it's clear this is no ordinary camera. With its slab-sided design and minimalist unmarked controls it looks like nothing else on the market, particularly when kitted with its huge 24-90mm zoom. The spec sheet is impressive, too; no other full-frame camera has quite the same combination of resolution and speed.

There's little to complain about in terms of image quality, either, with the sensor and lens combining to deliver superb results. The addition of 4K video shooting is the icing on the cake.

Unfortunately, though, the SL's eccentric control system with its unmarked, dual-function buttons marks it out as one of the least intuitive cameras to pick up and use that we've seen for a long time. Indeed, it's almost the antithesis of Leica's other recent design, the rangefinder-like Q, with its traditional control dials. But after spending some time studying it and reconfiguring it to my liking, I enjoyed shooting with the SL more than I initially expected. This is mainly down to its fabulous viewfinder, with its huge, bright and detailed view, and ability to preview more or less exactly how your image will look before shooting. This is surely the future, and once you've experienced the benefits of looking at the world through an EVF this good, you may find yourself reluctant to ever go back to using a DSLR.

But despite all its clever technology, does the Leica SL really make sense at the moment, particularly compared to the less expensive full-frame alternatives from Canon, Nikon or Sony, which also have many more lenses to choose from? For the majority of photographers, probably not, but in a way that's the point. Leica isn't really trying to be a mainstream player anyway; instead, it's made a very intriguing – and capable – camera that will suit a minority of photographers very well indeed.

FEATURES	8/10
BUILD & HANDLING	7/10
METERING	8/10
AUTOFOCUS	8/10
AWB & COLOUR	7/10
DYNAMIC RANGE	9/10
IMAGE QUALITY	9/10
VIEWFINDER/LCD	9/10

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The competition is split into three rounds, each with its unique theme: Nature, Time and Love. To enter, submit a video no more than five minutes in length, of HD quality. You can shoot on any camera you'd like, and the content and editing are up to your imagination – so long as it fits the round's particular theme.

Visit www.thevideomode.com to view the top videos, as well as the scores and a leaderboard for the overall competition. The winner will be the person with the most points after three rounds, who will win the overall prize as well as title of Amateur Filmmaker of the Year.

Round Two: Time

Get creative in this round by exploring the passage of time in different ways. Play with frame rates to speed up or slow down your footage, or capture a moment like a child's birthday party in a cinematic manner. For examples, go to www.thevideomode.com/examples.

Rounds and dates

Below is a list of the competition rounds, their themes and the dates you need to know. To view the results, visit www.thevideomode.com. When planning your entry, take into consideration the criteria of fulfilling the brief, creativity and technical excellence on which you'll be judged.

Theme	Opens	Closes
Round One: Nature	1 Aug	30 Sep
Round Two: Time	1 Oct	31 Dec
Round Three: Love	1 Jan	28 Feb

The overall winner will be announced in April 2016

Prizes

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Round Two

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Canon Legria Mini X, worth £329.99

Round Three

Canon XC10 (with 128GB CFast card and reader), worth £1,999.99
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Overall prize

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Anti-Shock setting

Q I have recently read that the Anti-Shock setting on my Olympus OM-D E-M10 should be set to 0sec. If the camera is being used on a tripod, should the setting turned off or be increased to, say, 2secs? Would this also have a similar effect as the mirror-up setting on a DSLR?

I also noticed that unless Anti-Shock is set to 'Off', I cannot use continuous shooting. Is 'Off' not the same as the 0sec setting?
The Miller

A Anti-Shock is related to mirror lock-up on DSLRs – indeed it's the term Olympus used for mirror lock-up in the menus of its old Four Thirds DSLRs.

On the OM-D and Pen models, its function is to minimise possible blurring from the action of the shutter itself. Conventionally, these cameras make an exposure by closing the shutter, resetting the sensor and opening the shutter again to make the picture. The Anti-Shock setting places a delay between the two shutter actions so there's less vibration.

However, even when it's enabled there's still some risk of blurring at certain shutter speeds, which on some models is very minor, but on others can be quite obvious. To combat this Olympus added the '0sec' Anti-Shock setting, which does something subtly different. Rather than starting the exposure as usual when the shutter opens, it leaves a further short delay for vibrations to subside, then starts the exposure electronically. This essentially eliminates the risk of 'shutter-shock' blur.

When using the camera on a tripod, you're normally best off leaving the setting at 0sec, and either adding a 2sec self-timer if your subject is static, or using a remote release to trigger the shutter.
Andy Westlake

Mamiya camera repairer

Q When I use the mirror-up facility to take landscapes on my Mamiya RB67 camera with 90mm lens, the shutter fires at the same time – which it should not.

Also, behind the rear element on my lens there is a fungus that needs cleaning. However, I live in Guernsey and there is no camera repairer locally. Could you therefore put me in touch with a repairer in the UK?
Roger Chandler

A A couple of camera repairers we can recommend trying are Fixation (0207 582 3294 or visit www.fixationuk.com) and H Lehmann (01782 413 611 or visit www.hlehmann.co.uk). Both are experienced camera repair companies that should be able to understand what you need. Old mechanical cameras tend to be relatively straightforward to repair, but problems can arise when replacement parts are needed as spares are no longer available. **Andy Westlake**

Old mechanical cameras, like the Mamiya RB67, are often relatively simple to repair

Raw files contain the original data recorded by the camera's sensor

© ANDY WESTLAKE

JPEG vs raw

Q I shoot mostly in the JPEG format, but have been wondering whether to use raw files. What is the raw format? Why should I shoot in it and how do I view the images on my computer?
Nicholas Bartholomew

A Raw files contain unprocessed data recorded by the camera's image sensor. To understand what this means, we need to know that almost all image sensors are made up of light-sensitive pixels that are covered by either red, green or blue-dye filters, which are what impart the colour vision to the camera. This means that the sensor doesn't record full colour at each pixel location.

Second, the sensor has a linear response to light – double the light level and the recorded signal doubles. But our vision is logarithmic, with each doubling of the light level giving a stop's increase in brightness.

What this means is that the raw data recorded by the sensor is not a visually meaningful image – instead, it has to be extensively processed to produce a recognisable photograph. Full-colour information is determined at each pixel location by a process known as demosaicing. The image is colour balanced so whites and greys appear properly neutral, and a tone curve applied to give a realistic range of brightness. The resultant image is then recorded as a JPEG, and it's this you see on the camera's screen after taking a shot.

However, all these manipulations result in some of the original data being discarded. This isn't a problem if you're happy with the images the camera generates, but many photographers like to do their own post-processing. In this case it's always best to start from the sensor's recorded data.

Because raw files aren't really image files, though, you usually need specialist software to open and process them on your computer. Normally the camera maker will provide a software disc to install its own raw conversion program. This will allow you to adjust the images' colour, white balance and exposure at the very least. **Andy Westlake**

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In the bag

Wildlife photographer Paul Hobson reveals what's in his macro kit bag. www.paulhobson.co.uk

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Canon EOS 5D Mark III

1 I have three Canon camera bodies, an EOS 1D X, an EOS 7D Mark II and an EOS 5D Mark III, which is the best for macro work. It's light, easy to use, offers phenomenal image quality (especially at higher ISO) and the ability to shoot multiple images on one frame. It's also full frame, which is convenient when I use my wideangle lens.

Canon EF 180mm f/3.5L Macro

2 I've had this lens for years. It's been dropped, covered in mud and leaves, yet still works well. I always prefer bigger macro lenses because the working distance is longer (brilliant for skittish insects), the backgrounds are more blurred and they have a tripod collar, which gives you the ability to swivel the lens without the tripod head.

Angle finder

3 A lot of my macro work with fungi and plants is taken at ground level because I love this position of view. To do so, I usually lie on the ground to look through the camera but often, such as in a field of orchids, lying down would crush the plants around me. I then use the angle finder to view my composition instead.

Cable release

4 I have always preferred the old style cable release as I find it more reliable. It's very useful when I'm using the torch because it allows me to work on the far side of the subject as I experiment with angles and lighting while I fire off shots.

Small spirit level

5 I often seem to lack the ability to get my images levelled correctly, and it's especially difficult to do so when I'm lying down. If I'm ever unsure, I just pop this neat gadget onto the camera's hotshoe to make sure I've got it exactly right.

Extension tubes

6 These are a really useful, as they attach to the lens and allow it to focus even closer. They do reduce the light a bit, so I need the tripod and cable release. They're indispensable for focusing extremely close into a flower or on tiny insects like zebra spiders.

List of kit Canon EOS 5D Mark III, Canon EF 180mm f/3.5L Macro USM, Canon EF 16 35mm f/2.8L USM, extension tubes, Gitzo tripod, angle finder, torch, cable release, spirit level

BLAST FROM THE PAST

Kodak DCS Pro 14n

Ian Burley looks at a full frame DSLR aimed at the professional market

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KODAK surprised the world of photography by revealing the DCS Pro 14n at Photokina 2002. It was a full-frame-sensor DSLR aimed at professionals and based on a heavily customised magnesium-alloy Nikon F80 film SLR body.

What's good It was considered competitively priced, but there was only Canon's EOS-1Ds that was launched at the same time and the rare Contax N Digital, which hardly made it to market as competition. The 13.7MP CMOS sensor worked well at low ISOs and afforded lots of resolution, making it attractive for studio work. Its big and bright full-frame viewfinder was luxurious. You also got one CompactFlash and a forward-thinking SD card slot.

What's bad It looked compact, but handled poorly and was bulky. The ISO range was limited to 400 at full resolution and even by ISO 200 noise was apparent. When using lenses designed for film, corner resolution and brightness could be poor. Kodak worked hard to improve the camera, with a steady flow of firmware and hardware updates, but the DCS Pro project only lasted until May 2005.

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Professor Newman on...

Sony's raw files

Professor Bob Newman looks at Sony's new uncompressed raw file format

Sony has launched an uncompressed raw file format that is available for its premium cameras such as the Alpha 7R II. The new format omits the compression found in previous Sony raw files.

Sony should be given its due in being responsive to user comments and requests, and it should also be realised that the deficiencies in its old raw format would not be apparent were it not for superb image quality that its sensors can provide. This problem was unearthed by photographer Iliah Borg and photographic software developer Alex Tutubalin, who are jointly responsible for a number of raw-related software products, including the raw developer RPP, the raw analyser RawDigger and the software library LibRaw, presumably as a part of their work in understanding and decoding the various manufacturers' raw formats.

Until now, Sony has only offered compressed raw files. The compression used is lossy, and at this stage we must differentiate this from lossless compression that eliminates data that carries no information and can therefore be reversed. By contrast, lossy compression eliminates information. The hope of the designer of the compression scheme is that the eliminated information relates to parts of the image that are invisible.

This elimination of information can be achieved in a number of ways. One is to use non-linear encoding. The notion is that the bright parts of an image are usually over-encoded and so fewer bits can be used to encode them. The over-encoding occurs because the bright parts of the image carry the greatest quantity of photon (shot) noise, which naturally dithers the image. Thus, any subtlety of tone provided by fine gradations in coding levels is swamped by the natural noise. This is the concept behind Nikon's lossy raw format and is also used in Sony's raw format, where it is used to transform a 14-bit sensor output into an 11-bit code. Sony's coding scheme further compresses the 11-bit data into an effective 8-bits per pixel by using a delta-modulation scheme within 16-pixel blocks.

The problem with Sony's scheme is that errors are introduced if the range of brightness difference (delta) within each block is too large. These errors are apparent only in blocks containing sharp transitions from dark to bright, and only then if some extreme processing has been used. Unfortunately, the Sony sensors take well to such processing, opening up some useful options to photographers. With this problem, Sony partially negated one of its big advantages, which is presumably why it has decided to offer its users the uncompressed option.

You can read Alex and Iliah's original article at www.rawdigger.com/howtouse/sony-craw-arw2-posterization-detection.

In this example, shot using the RX1R II, extreme manipulation of Sony's compressed raw gives artefacts at high-contrast edges that are absent when using uncompressed raw files instead

Bob Newman is currently Professor of Computer Science at the University of Wolverhampton. He has been working with the design and development of high-technology equipment for 35 years and two of his products have won innovation awards. Bob is also a camera nut and a keen amateur photographer

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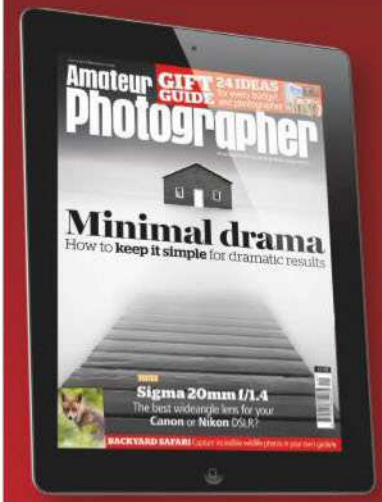

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35mm f/1.4L USM	£989.00
35mm f/1.4L II USM	£1,799.99
35mm f/2.0 IS USM	£399.00
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50mm f/1.2 L USM	£995.00
50mm f/1.4 USM	£237.00
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85mm f/1.8 USM	£237.00
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100mm f/2.8 USM Macro	£373.00
100mm f/2.8L Macro IS	£635.00
135mm f/2.0L USM	£699.00
180mm f/3.5L USM	£1,049.00
200mm f/2.0L IS USM	£4,399.00
200mm f/2.8L USM/2	£569.00
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EF-S 18-135mm IS STM	£329.00
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150mm f/2.8 EX DG OS HSM	£668.00
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300mm f/2.8 APO EX DG	£2,299.00
500mm f/4.5 APO EX DG	£3,799.99
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18-300mm f/3.5-6.3 DC OS HSM	£379.00
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24-70mm f/2.8 IF EX DG	£599.00
24-105mm f/4 DG OS HSM	£679.00
50-500mm f/4.5-6.3 DG OS HSM	£699.99
70-200mm f/2.8 APO EX DG OS	£799.00
70-300mm f/4.0-5.6 APO Macro	£150.00
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24.2 megapixels | 5.0 fps | 1080p movie mode
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D5500 Body £499
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D5300 Body £389
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24.1 megapixels | 6.0 fps | 1080p movie mode
D7100 From **£619**

D7100 Body **£619**
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CUSTOMER REVIEW: D7100 Body
★★★★★ 'Quality bit of kit! Love it!' *Fang! Warwickshire*

D7200
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D7200 From **£752**

D7200 Body **£752**
D7200 + 18-105mm **£929**

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D610 Body **£1067**
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D750 Body **£1499**
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D810 From **£2349**

D810 Body **£2349**
D810A Body **£2699**

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D4s
16.2 megapixels | 11.0 fps | Full Frame CMOS Sensor
D4s Body **£4449**

D4s Body **£4449**

CUSTOMER REVIEW: D4s Body
★★★★★ 'Spectacular Camera' *Charlie Delta – Hertfordshire*

Nikon winter Cashback* offer ends 13.1.16

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A7R II **£2599**

A7R II Body **£2599**
A7S II Body **£2499**
A7R Body **£999**
A7 II Body £1244
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24.3 megapixels | 11.0 fps | 1080p movie mode
£50 CASHBACK*
A6000 From **£439**

A6000 Body £439
£389 Inc. £50 Cashback*
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£444 Inc. £50 Cashback*

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24.3 megapixels | 12.0 fps | 1080p movie mode
A77 II From **£764**

A77 II Body **£764**
A77 II + 16-50mm **£1199**
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Sony FE 70 200mm f4.0 G OSS **£1005**

RECOMMENDED LENSES:
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Sony 70 300mm f4.5 5.6 G SSM . **£689**
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Sony Cashback* offer ends 31.1.16

Panasonic

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£862 Inc. £100 Cashback*
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£989 Inc. £100 Cashback*
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£367 Inc. £100 Cashback*
G7 + 14-140mm £732
£632 Inc. £100 Cashback*

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20.03 megapixels | 8.0 fps | 4K Video
up to £150 CASHBACK*
GX8 From **£799**

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£749 Inc. £50 Cashback*
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OM-D E-M1 *Black or silver*
16.3 megapixels | 10.0 fps | 1080p movie mode
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OM-D E-M1 From **£871**

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OM-D E-M1 + 12-40mm **£1499**
OM-D E-M5 II Body **£869**
OM-D E-M5 II + 12-40mm **£1449**
OM-D E-M5 II + 12-50mm **£1070**
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E-M10 II *Black or Silver*

16.3 megapixels | 8.5 fps
E-M10 II From **£549**

OM-D E-M10 II Body **£549**
OM-D E-M10 II + 14-42mm **£649**

RECOMMENDED LENSES:
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£520 Inc. £100 Cashback* .....
Olympus 60mm f2.8 Macro £349
£274 Inc. £75 Cashback* .....

Olympus Cashback* offer ends 31.1.16

PENTAX

K-3 II
24.3 megapixels | 8.3 fps | 1080p movie mode
FREE 50mm lens*
K-3 II From **£749**

K-3 II Body **£749**
K-3 II + 18-55mm **£829**
K-3 II + 18-135mm **£999**
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K-3 Body **£659**
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K-50 **£339**
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Pentax* offer ends 16.1.16

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16.3 megapixels | 7.0 fps
FREE lens*
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750D + 18-135mm £739
£689 Inc. £50 Cashback*

700D Body £391
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CUSTOMER REVIEW: EOS 70D + 18-135mm IS STM
'An excellent step up'
Adam Portsmouth

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20.2 megapixels | 10.0 fps | 1080p movie mode | up to £250 CASHBACK† when bought with selected lenses

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20.2 megapixels | 4.5 fps | 1080p movie mode | Full Frame CMOS sensor | £100 CASHBACK*

6D Body **£1132**

6D Body £1132
£1032 Inc. £100 Cashback*

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5D Mark III

22.3 megapixels | 6.0 fps | 1080p movie mode | Full Frame CMOS sensor | up to £250 CASHBACK* when bought with selected lenses

5D Mark III Body **£2249**

5D Mark III Body £2249

CUSTOMER REVIEW: EOS 5D Mk III Digital SLR Camera
'You haven't got one? Get one!'
Roland – Northampton

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EOS 1Dx

18.1 megapixels | 12.0 fps | Full Frame CMOS sensor

1Dx Body **£4399**

1Dx Body £4399

CUSTOMER REVIEW: EOS 1D X Digital SLR Camera Body
'...bought this as an upgrade to the 5D Mk 2 and have never looked back.'
Dave – Cornwall

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Nikon

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60mm f2.8 D AF Micro £368
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Canon winter Cashback* offer ends 13.1.16
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23mm F1.4 XF R ... Mint- £549
27mm F2.8 XF ... E++ / Unused £199 - £229
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Sigma 10-20mm F4-5.6 EX DC HSM ... E++ £179
Olympus 11-22mm F2.8-3.5 Zuiko ... E+ / Mint- £249 - £299
Olympus 12-60mm F2.8-4 ED SWD ... E+ £299 - £349
Olympus 14-35mm F2 SWD ... E++ £989
Olympus 14-54mm F2.8-3.5 MkII ... E++ £349
Olympus 18-180mm F3.5-6.3 Zuiko ... E++ £249
Panasonic 25mm F1.4 Summ lux D ... E++ £299
Olympus 25mm F2.8 Zuiko ... E++ £139
Olympus 35mm F3.5 Macro Zu ko ... E++ £98 - £129
Olympus 40-150mm F3.5-4.5 ZuikoE+ / E++ £39 - £49
Olympus 40-150mm F4-5.6 ED Zuiko ... E+ / E++ £45 - £49
Olympus 50-200mm F2.8-3.5 SWD ... E++ £499
Olympus 50-200mm F2.8-3.5 Zuiko ... E++ £369
Olympus 50mm F2 ED Macro Zuiko ... E++ £269
Sigma 70-200mm F2.8 Apo EX DG Macro HSM ... Mint- £399
Olympus 70-300mm F4-5.6 ED Zuiko ... E++ / Mint- £189 - £199
Samyang 85mm F1.4 IF MC Aspherical ... E+ £169
Olympus EC14 Zuiko Tele Converter ... Mint- £189
Olympus EC20 2x Tele Converter ... Mint- £249

Micro 4/3rds Lenses
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Panasonic 12-35mm F2.8 G Vario OIS ... E++ £499
Panasonic 12-35mm F2.8 G X Vario OIS HD ... E++ £519
Olympus 12-40mm F2.8 M.Zuiko ... E++ / Mint- £549 - £589
Olympus 12-50mm F3.5-6.3 M Zuiko ... E+ / E++ £129 - £139
Panasonic 12.5mm F12 G 3d ... E++ / Mint- £89 - £99
Rokinon 12mm F2 CS ... E++ £219
Olympus 12mm F2 ED M.Zuiko ... E++ £459
Olympus 12mm F2.0 ED LTD Black ... E+ £429
Panasonic 14-140mm F4-5.8 OIS HD ... E++ £249
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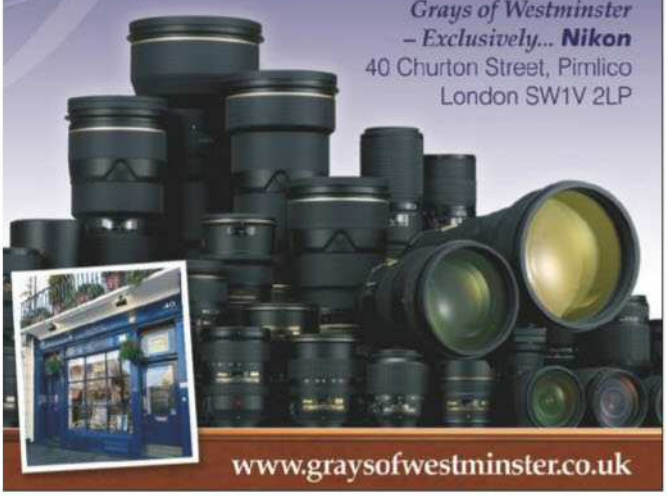

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Frisco 7x5 seven colours £2.29
Frisco 8x6 seven colours £2.79
Frisco 9x6 seven colours £3.49
Frisco 10x8 seven colours £3.79
Frisco 12x8 seven colours £4.59
Frisco A4 seven colours £3.99
Frisco A3 seven colours £8.99

Wood Bevel, Glass Front:
Emilia 6x4 two colours £4.99
Emilia 7x5 two colours £5.99
Emilia 8x6 two colours £6.99
Emilia 10x8 two colours £7.99
Emilia 12x8 two colours £8.99
Rio 6x4 four colours £5.99
Rio 7x5 four colours £6.99
Rio 8x6 four colours £7.99
Rio 10x8 four colours £8.99
Rio 12x8 four colours £9.99

More Ink Cartridges...

EPSON

T0711-T0714 Cheetah Inks
Originals:
Set of 4 £32.99
Black 7.4ml £8.99
Colours 5.5ml each £8.99
Compatibles:
Set of 4 £14.99
Black 7.4ml £4.99
Colours 5.5ml each £3.99

T0791-T0796 Owl Inks
Originals:
Set of 6 £72.99
Colours 11.1ml each £12.99
Compatibles:
Set of 6 £19.99
Colours 11.1ml each £3.99

T0801-T0806 Hummingbird Inks
Originals:
Set of 6 £49.99
Colours 7.4ml each £8.99
Compatibles:
Set of 6 £19.99
Colours 7.4ml each £3.99

T0871-T0879 Flamingo Inks
Originals:
Set of 8 £66.99
Colours 11.4ml each £9.99
Compatibles:
Set of 8 £27.99
Colours 11.4ml each £3.99

T0961-T0969 Husky Inks
Originals:
Set of 8 £69.99
Colours 11.4ml each £8.99
Compatibles:
Set of 8 £27.99
Colours 11.4ml each £3.99

T1571-T1579 Turtle Inks
Originals:
Set of 8 £149.99
Colours 25.9ml each £18.99

T7601-T7609 Killer Whale
Originals:
Set of 9 £169.99
Colours 25.9ml each £18.99

hp

Originals:
No.38 Colours 27ml each £26.99
No.62XL Black 12ml £21.99
No.62XL Colour 11.5ml £23.99
No.300 Black 4ml £10.99
No.300 Colour 4ml £12.99
No.301 Black 3ml £9.99
No.301 Colour 3ml £11.99
No.301XL Black 8ml £18.99
No.301XL Colour 6ml £18.99
No.350 Black 4.5ml £11.99
No.351 Colour 3.5ml £14.99
No.363 Black 6ml £13.99
No.363 C/M/Y/PC/PM each £9.99
No.363 SET OF 6 £39.99
No.364 Black 6ml £7.99
No.364 PB/C/M/Y 3ml each £6.99
No.364 SET OF 4 £21.99
No.364XL Black 14ml £13.99
No.364XL PB/C/M/Y 6ml each £12.99
No.364XL SET OF 4 £49.99
No.920XL SET OF 4 £46.99
No.932XL SET OF 4 £43.99
No.950XL SET OF 4 £69.99
Compatibles:
No.15 Black 46ml £4.99
No.21 Black 10ml £7.99
No.22 Colour 21ml £11.99
No.45 Black 45ml £4.99
No.56 Black 24ml £9.99
No.57 Colour 24ml £12.99
No.78 Colour 36ml £9.99
No.110 Colour 12ml £10.99
No.300XL Black 18ml £14.99
No.300XL Colour 18ml £16.99
No.301XL Black 15ml £14.99
No.301XL Colour 18ml £16.99
No.337 Black 21ml £10.99
No.338 Black 21ml £10.99
No.339 Black 34ml £12.99
No.343 Colour 21ml £12.99
No.344 Colour 21ml £14.99
No.348 Photo 21ml £12.99
No.350XL Black 30ml £14.99
No.351XL Colour 20ml £16.99
No.363 Black 20ml £6.99
No.363 Colours 6ml each £4.99
No.363 SET OF 6 £24.99
No.364 Black 10ml £4.99
No.364 Colours 5ml each £3.99
No.364 SET OF 4 £15.99
No.364XL Black 18ml £8.99
No.364XL Colours 11ml each £7.99
No.364XL SET OF 4 £31.99
No.920XL SET OF 4 £19.99
No.932XL SET OF 4 £29.99
No.940XL SET OF 4 £29.99
No.950XL SET OF 4 £29.99

Many more in stock!

Photo Papers

We carry a massive range of papers (sheets & rolls) at competitive prices. Below are some examples of the selection we stock.

ILFORD GALERIE

Photo Glossy 160gsm:
6x4 50 sheets +50 FREE £3.99
A4 100 sheets £12.99
Photo Satin 200gsm:
6x4 100 sheets +100 FREE £9.99
A4 100 sheets +100 FREE £19.99
Photo Glossy 200gsm:
6x4 100 sheets +100 FREE £9.99
A4 20 sheets £6.99
Premium Pearl 270gsm:
6x4 50 sheets +50 FREE £6.99
A4 20 sheets +20 FREE £8.99
Premium Gloss 270gsm:
A4 25 sheets OFFER £8.99
A3 25 sheets OFFER £15.99
A3+ 25 sheets OFFER £19.99
Smooth Pearl 310gsm:
6x4 100 sheets £14.99
7x5 100 sheets £17.99
A4 25 sheets £12.99
A4 100 sheets £39.99
A4 250 sheets £84.99
A3 25 sheets £25.99
A3+ 25 sheets £35.99
17" Roll 30 metres £69.99
24" Roll 30 metres £96.99
Smooth Gloss 310gsm:
6x4 100 sheets £14.99
7x5 100 sheets £17.99
A4 25 sheets £12.99
A4 100 sheets £39.99
A3 25 sheets £25.99
A3+ 25 sheets £35.99
Premium Matt Duo 200 gsm:
A4 50 sheets £12.99
A3+ 50 sheets £34.99
Heavy Duo Matt 310gsm:
A4 50 sheets £17.99
A3+ 50 sheets £44.99
Gold Fibre Silk 310gsm:
A4 50 sheets £37.99
A3+ 50 sheets £89.99
Gold Mono Silk 270gsm:
A4 25 sheets £16.99
A3+ 25 sheets £42.99

Fotospeed

Smooth Pearl 290gsm:
6x4 100 sheets £12.99
7x5 100 sheets £16.99
A4 50 sheets £17.99
A3 50 sheets £34.99
A3+ 25 sheets £25.99
Panoramic 25 sheets £26.99
17" Roll 30 metres £68.99
24" Roll 30 metres £85.99
PF Lustre 275gsm:
6x4 100 sheets £12.99
7x5 100 sheets £16.99
A4 50 sheets £17.99
A3 25 sheets £35.99
A3+ 50 sheets £47.99
Panoramic 25 sheets £26.99
17" Roll 30 metres £69.99
24" Roll 30 metres £86.99
PF Gloss 270gsm:
A4 50 sheets £17.99
A3 50 sheets £35.99
A3+ 50 sheets £47.99
Panoramic 25 sheets £26.99
Matt Ultra 240gsm:
A4 50 sheets £12.99
A3 50 sheets £26.99
A3+ 50 sheets £35.99
Fine Art / Fibre Base Papers:
Baryta A4 20 sheets £21.99
Bartya A3 20 sheets £42.99
Etching A4 25 sheets £19.99
Etching A3 25 sheets £34.99
Smooth Cotton A4 25 sh £24.99
Smooth Cotton A3 25 sh £51.99

Canon

PP-201 Plus Glossy II 275gsm:
6x4 50 sheets £9.99
7x5 20 sheets £11.99
A4 20 sheets £11.99
A3 20 sheets £27.99
A3+ 20 sheets £36.99
PT-101 Pro Platinum 300gsm:
6x4 20 sheets £7.99
A4 20 sheets £16.99
A3 20 sheets £37.99
A3+ 10 sheets £24.99
SG-201 Semi-Gloss 260gsm:
6x4 50 sheets £9.99
A4 20 sheets £11.99
A3 20 sheets £27.99
A3+ 20 sheets £42.99
LU-101 Pro Lustre 260gsm:
A4 50 sheets £14.99
A3 50 sheets £32.99
A3+ 50 sheets £49.99

Permajet

Smooth Pearl 280gsm:
6x4 100 sheets £12.99
7x5 100 sheets £18.99
A4 50 sheets £18.99
A4 50 sheets £18.99
A3 50 sheets £35.99
A3+ 25 sheets £28.99
17" Roll 30 metres £64.99
24" Roll 30 metres £89.99
Ultra Pearl 295gsm:
6x4 100 sheets £14.99
7x5 100 sheets £20.99
A4 25 sheets £12.99
A3 25 sheets £22.99
A3+ 25 sheets £30.99
13" Roll 10 metres £21.99
17" Roll 30 metres £68.99
24" Roll 30 metres £92.99
Titanium Lustre 280gsm:
A4 25 sheets £22.99
A3 25 sheets £44.99
A3+ 25 sheets £62.99
Oyster 271gsm:
6x4 100 sheets £12.99
7x5 100 sheets £18.99
A4 50 sheets £18.99
A3 25 sheets £22.99
A3+ 25 sheets £28.99
13" Roll 10 metres £26.99
17" Roll 30 metres £64.99
24" Roll 30 metres £89.99
Gloss 271gsm:
6x4 100 sheets £12.99
7x5 100 sheets £18.99
A4 50 sheets £18.99
A3 25 sheets £22.99
A3+ 25 sheets £28.99
13" Roll 10 metres £26.99
17" Roll 30 metres £64.99
24" Roll 30 metres £89.99
Matt Plus 240gsm:
6x4 100 sheets £10.99
7x5 100 sheets £13.99
A4 50 sheets £13.99
A3 25 sheets £17.99
A3+ 25 sheets £22.99
13" Roll 10 metres £24.99
17" Roll 30 metres £42.99
24" Roll 30 metres £58.99
Matt Proofing 160gsm:
A4 150 sheets £18.99
A3 75 sheets £22.99
17" Roll 30 metres £26.99
24" Roll 30 metres £36.99
Double Sided Matt 250gsm:
A4 100 sheets £24.99
A3 50 sheets £27.99
Fine Art / Fibre Base Papers:
FB Gold Silk A4 25 sh £23.99
FB Gold Silk A3 25 sh £47.99
FB Distinction A4 25 sh £25.99
FB Distinction A3 25 sh £48.99
FB Royal A4 25 sheets £28.99
FB Royal A3 25 sheets £56.99
FB Gloss A4 25 sheets £26.99
FB Gloss A3 25 sheets £51.99
FB Matt A4 25 sheets £19.99
FB Matt A3 25 sheets £38.99
Artist A4 25 sheets £22.99
Artist A3 25 sheets £39.99
Museum A4 25 sheets £25.99
Museum A3 25 sheets £48.99
Parchment A4 25 sheets £22.99
Parchment A3 25 sheets £39.99
Omega A4 25 sheets £24.99
Omega A3 25 sheets £46.99
Portrait A4 25 sheets £26.99
Portrait A3 25 sheets £53.99
Portrait White A4 25 sh £26.99
Portrait White A3 25 sh £49.99

EPSON

Premium Gloss 255gsm:
6x4 40 sheets +40 FREE £9.99
7x5 30 sheets £9.99
A4 15 sheets +15 FREE £9.99
A3 20 sheets £29.99
A3+ 20 sheets OFFER £24.99
Ultra Gloss 300gsm:
6x4 50 sheets £9.99
7x5 50 sheets £12.99
A4 15 sheets £11.99
Premium Semi-Gloss 251gsm:
6x4 50 sheets £8.99
A4 20 sheets £14.99
A3 20 sheets £29.99
A3+ 20 sheets OFFER £24.99
Archival Matte 192gsm:
A4 50 sheets £14.99
A3 50 sheets £33.99
A3+ 50 sheets £44.99
Heavyweight Matte 167gsm:
A4 50 sheets £11.99
A3 50 sheets £34.99
A3+ 50 sheets £44.99

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The full range of Sandisk and Lexar memory cards at very competitive prices.

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- 32GB £22.99
- 64GB £35.99
- 128GB £63.99

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- 64GB £42.99
- 128GB £82.99

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- 16GB £27.99
- 32GB £36.99
- 64GB £56.99

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- 32GB £56.99
- 64GB £99.99
- 128GB £192.99

Sandisk Ultra

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- 16GB £15.99
- 32GB £24.99

Sandisk Extreme

800X (120MB/s)
- 16GB £26.99
- 32GB £32.99
- 64GB £47.99
- 128GB £94.99

Sandisk Extreme Pro

1066X (160MB/s)
- 16GB £33.99
- 32GB £47.99
- 64GB £82.99
- 128GB £149.99

XQD Cards

Lexar Professional

1333X (200MB/s)
- 32GB £69.99
- 64GB £99.99

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Lexar Professional

633X (95MB/s)
- 32GB £21.99
- 64GB £43.99

Delkin Professional

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- 64GB £32.99

Sandisk Ultra

320X (48MB/s)
- 16GB £6.99
- 32GB £12.99
- 64GB £24.99

Readers & Cases

- **Lexar USB3** Card Reader £22.99
- **Lexar HR1** Workflow Hub £49.99
- **Delkin USB2** Card Reader £9.99
- **Delkin USB3** Card Reader £19.99
- **Delkin** SD Card (x8) Case £6.99
- **Delkin** CF Card (x4) Case £6.99

Batteries

Replacement rechargeable Li-ion batteries, manufactured by Hahnel or Blumax. All come with a two-year guarantee.

- **NB-2L/LH** for Canon £9.99
- **NB-4L** for Canon £9.99
- **NB-5L** for Canon £9.99
- **NB-6L** for Canon £9.99
- **NB-7L** for Canon £9.99
- **NB-9L** for Canon £9.99
- **NB-10L** for Canon £12.99
- **NB-11L** for Canon £12.99
- **BP-511** for Canon £12.99
- **LP-E5** for Canon £9.99
- **LP-E6** for Canon £16.99
- **LP-E8** for Canon £12.99
- **LP-E10** for Canon £12.99
- **LP-E12** for Canon £12.99
- **NP45** for Fuji £9.99
- **NP50** for Fuji £9.99
- **NP95** for Fuji £9.99
- **NPW126** for Fuji £12.99
- **NP400** for Fuji £12.99
- **EN-EL3E** for Nikon £14.99
- **EN-EL5** for Nikon £9.99
- **EN-EL9** for Nikon £12.99
- **EN-EL10** for Nikon £9.99
- **EN-EL11** for Nikon £9.99
- **EN-EL12** for Nikon £9.99
- **EN-EL14** for Nikon £19.99
- **EN-EL15** for Nikon £24.99
- **EN-EL19** for Nikon £12.99
- **EN-EL20** for Nikon £12.99
- **EN-EL21** for Nikon £12.99
- **Li10B/12B** for Olympus £9.99
- **Li40B/42B** for Olympus £9.99
- **Li50B** for Olympus £9.99
- **BLM-1** for Olympus £12.99
- **BLN-1** for Olympus £24.99
- **BLS-1** for Olympus £12.99
- **BLS-5** for Olympus £15.99
- **CGR-S006** for Panasonic £9.99
- **CGA-S007** for Panasonic £9.99
- **DMW-BCG10** Panasonic £19.99
- **DMW-BCM13** Panasonic £19.99
- **DMW-BLB13** Panasonic £27.99
- **DMW-BLC12** Panasonic £23.99
- **DMW-BLD10** Panasonic £23.99
- **DMW-BLG10** Panasonic £22.99
- **DMW-BMB9** Panasonic £22.99
- **D-Li90** for Pentax £12.99
- **D-Li109** for Pentax £12.99
- **SLB-1137D** for Samsung £9.99
- **SLB-1674** for Samsung £12.99
- **BG-1** for Sony £19.99
- **BX-1** for Sony £14.99
- **BY-1** for Sony £12.99
- **NP-FM500H** for Sony £19.99
- **NP-FH50** for Sony £19.99
- **NP-FW50** for Sony £24.99

Battery Grips

Professional battery grips, made by Hahnel.

- **5DMkII** for Canon £84.99
- **5DMkIII** for Canon £84.99
- **6D** for Canon £84.99
- **7D** for Canon £84.99
- **70D** for Canon £84.99
- **650D/700D** for Canon £84.99
- **D600** for Nikon £84.99
- **D800/D810** for Nikon £84.99
- **D3300/D5300** for Nikon £74.99
- **D7100** for Nikon £84.99

Battery Chargers

Universal Chargers
- **Unipal ORIGINAL** £19.99
- **Unipal PLUS** £24.99
- **Unipal EXTRA** £29.99

AA & AAA Chargers
- **Hahnel TC Novo** inc. 4xAA £8.99
- **Energizer Pro** inc. 4xAA £14.99
- **Energizer 1 Hr** inc. 4xAA £22.99

Other Batteries

Pre-Charged Rechargables
- **AA** GP Recyko 3+1 FREE £5.24
- **AAA** GP Recyko 3+1 FREE £5.24
- **AA** Energizer Extreme (4) £8.99
- **AAA** Energizer Extreme (4) £6.99

Standard Rechargeables
- **AA** GP 2600mAh (4) £9.99
- **AA** Lloytron 1300mAh (4) £3.99
- **AA** Lloytron 2700mAh (4) £6.99
- **AAA** Lloytron 1100mAh (4) £3.99

Lithium Batteries
- **AA** Energizer Ultimate (4) £5.99
- **AAA** Energizer Ultimate (4) £5.99
- **CR123A** Energizer (1) £1.99
- **CR2** Energizer (1) £1.99
- **2CR5** Energizer (1) £3.99
- **CRP2** Energizer (1) £3.99
- **CRV3** Energizer (1) £5.99
- **A544** Energizer Alkaline (1) £1.99
- **A23** Energizer Alkaline (1) £1.99
- **LR44** Energizer Alkaline (2) £1.99
- **CR2025, CR2032** etc £1.99

Filters

One of the largest ranges of screw-in threaded filters in the UK, from Hoya, Kood and Marumi. We carry sizes from 24mm, up to 105mm, and offer Clear Protectors, UVs, Skylights, Circular Polarisers, ND4s, ND8s, ND16s, ND32s, ND64s, ND500s, ND1000s, Variable NDs, Starbursts, Close Up Sets and more! Below are just a few examples...

KOOD Slim Frame UV Filters
- 37mm £4.99
- 40.5mm £4.99
- 46mm £4.99
- 49mm £4.99
- 52mm £4.99
- 55mm £5.99
- 58mm £6.99
- 62mm £7.99
- 67mm £8.99
- 72mm £9.99
- 77mm £11.99
- 82mm £14.99
- 86mm £19.99

KOOD Slim Frame Circular Polarisers
- 37mm £12.99
- 40.5mm £12.99
- 46mm £12.99
- 49mm £12.99
- 52mm £14.99
- 55mm £15.99
- 58mm £17.99
- 62mm £19.99
- 67mm £22.99
- 72mm £26.99
- 77mm £29.99
- 82mm £34.99
- 86mm £39.99

KOOD ND4 & ND8 Filters
- 52mm £26.99
- 58mm £34.99

Marumi DHG Slim Frame Multi-coated Clear Protectors
- 37mm £10.99
- 43mm £10.99
- 46mm £10.99
- 49mm £10.99
- 52mm £10.99
- 55mm £11.99
- 58mm £12.99
- 62mm £14.99
- 67mm £15.99
- 72mm £17.99
- 77mm £19.99
- 82mm £22.99

Marumi DHG Slim Frame Multi-coated UV Filters
- 52mm £13.99
- 58mm £15.99
- 62mm £17.99
- 67mm £19.99
- 72mm £21.99
- 77mm £24.99

Marumi DHG Slim Frame Multi-coated Circular Polarisers
- 52mm £31.99
- 58mm £35.99
- 62mm £39.99
- 67mm £44.99
- 72mm £49.99
- 77mm £54.99
- 82mm £69.99

Hoya HMC Slim Frame UV Filters
- 37mm £12.99
- 40.5mm £12.99
- 46mm £12.99
- 49mm £11.99
- 52mm £11.99
- 58mm £14.99
- 62mm £16.99
- 67mm £18.99
- 72mm £21.99
- 77mm £25.99
- 82mm £29.99

HOYA Pro-1D Slim Frame Multi-coated Clear Protectors
- 52mm SPECIAL £16.99
- 58mm £28.99
- 62mm £31.99
- 67mm £35.99
- 72mm £39.99
- 77mm SPECIAL £29.99
- 82mm £49.99

HOYA Pro-1D Slim Frame Multi-coated Circular Polarisers
- 52mm £52.99
- 58mm £60.99
- 62mm £67.99
- 67mm £75.99
- 72mm £90.99
- 77mm SPECIAL £79.99
- 82mm £120.99

Square Filters

We stock three widths of square filters: A-type (67mm wide), P-Type (84mm wide) and Z-Type (100mm wide). Made in the UK, Kood square filters are optically flat, with excellent colour density, neutrality and stability. They received a maximum 5 star rating from Digital Camera Magazine.

P-Type: 84mm wide filters
- **Standard Holder** £5.99
- **Wide Angle Holder** £6.99
- **Filter Wallet** for 8 filters £9.99
- **Adapter Rings** 49-82mm £4.99
- **Circular Polariser** £27.99
- **ND2** Solid £12.99
- **ND2** Soft Graduated £13.99
- **ND2** Hard Graduated £13.99
- **ND4** Solid £12.99
- **ND4** Soft Graduated £13.99
- **ND4** Hard Graduated £13.99
- **ND8** Solid £14.99
- **ND8** Soft Graduated £15.99
- **ND8** Hard Graduated £15.99
- **Light Blue** Graduated £12.99
- **Dark Blue** Graduated £12.99
- **Light Tobacco** Graduated £12.99
- **Dark Tobacco** Graduated £12.99
- **Light Sunset** Graduated £14.99
- **Dark Sunset** Graduated £14.99
- **Starbursts** x4, x6, x8 £17.99
- **Red/Green/Yellow** each £14.99
- **Six-piece ND Filter Kit** £59.99

A popular kit containing an ND2, ND2 Soft Grad, ND4, ND4 Soft Grad, Filter Holder, plus Adapter Ring of your choice (49-82mm).

Z-Type: 100mm wide filters
- **Pro Holder** £24.99
- **Adapter Rings** 52-95mm £8.99
- **ND2** Solid £16.99
- **ND2** Soft Graduated £17.99
- **ND2** Hard Graduated £17.99
- **ND4** Solid £16.99
- **ND4** Soft Graduated £17.99
- **ND4** Hard Graduated £17.99
- **ND8** Solid £18.99
- **ND8** Soft Graduated £19.99
- **ND8** Hard Graduated £19.99
- **Light Blue** Graduated £17.99
- **Dark Blue** Graduated £17.99
- **Light Tobacco** Graduated £17.99
- **Dark Tobacco** Graduated £17.99
- **Light Sunset** Graduated £18.99
- **Dark Sunset** Graduated £18.99

A-Type: 67mm wide filters
- **Standard Holder** £4.99
- **Adapter Rings** 37-62mm £8.99
- **ND2** Solid £10.99
- **ND2** Graduated £11.99
- **ND4** Solid £10.99
- **ND4** Graduated £11.99
- **ND8** Solid £11.99
- **ND8** Graduated £12.99

Lens Accessories

Bayonet-Fit Lens Hoods
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Final Analysis

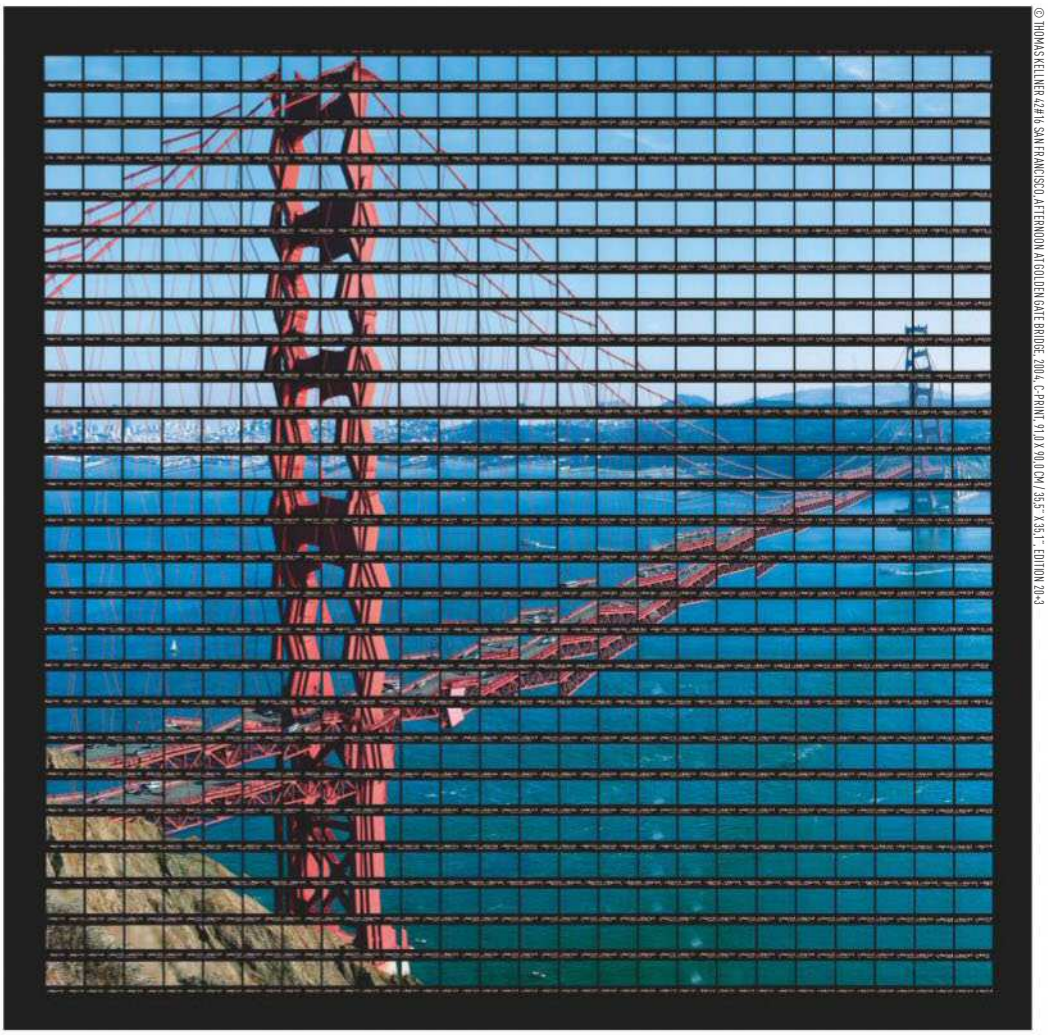
Roger Hicks considers...

'Golden Gate Bridge', 2004, by Thomas Kellner

Blaise Pascal famously said that the heart has its reasons, of which reason knows nothing. The same is true of art. On his website, Thomas Kellner (www.thomaskellner.com), the Berlin-based artist, describes the contact-sheet method as his trademark style, and adds, 'The buildings seem to be broken apart, dancing and reminding us of the vulnerability of our values and creations.' I don't see it that way, though. Instead, it seems to me to be a way of forcing us to look at something as if for the first time, putting it back together in our heads: the exact opposite of vulnerability.

I first saw his work at Galerie Vrais Rêves (www.vraisreves.com) in Arles, France, and loved it. Since choosing this image, I've found one I like even better: 'Moscow, Basilius Cathedral (night)', 2014 (see it on his site). His work often relies on the familiarity of the subject matter, and although it would probably still work with less-known buildings, the iconic status of much of his subject matter is important. So is his use (and subversion) of a convention familiar to most photographers: a contact sheet.

Fairly obviously, they aren't conventional contact sheets, even though the edge markings on this one all say Kodak Portra 400VC. The edge numbers per row are, predictably, in dozens, and in sets of three at that: 25-36 (top, 4th, 7th, 10th rows), 13-24 (2nd, 5th, 8th, 11th) and 1-12 (3rd, 6th, 9th, 12th). I have a feeling that this ought to tell me something, but it doesn't, so I move on to another question: how does he do it?



© THOMAS KELLNER 42#16 SAN FRANCISCO, AFTERNOON AT GOLDEN GATE BRIDGE 2004, C-PRINT, 91.0 X 90.0 CM / 35.5" X 35.1", EDITION 20+3

'You could dismiss it as an empty technical trick. Except that... empty it isn't'

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However he did it, you could dismiss it as an empty technical trick. Except that it isn't. Technical trick it may be. Empty, it isn't. Normally the vision comes first, the technique second, but here the vision is also wholly dependent on the technique: it's a circular argument. Do we have a romantic vision of his labouring endlessly, or is the picture the thing? Is it mere novelty, a photographic in-joke?

This brings me back to what I said in the opening paragraph, about art having its reasons of which reason knows nothing. Ultimately, art either works or it doesn't. This works for me. It may not work for you. Sometimes it's fascinating, though, just to think about what does and doesn't work, and why.

AP

Roger Hicks has been writing about photography since 1981 and has published more than three dozen books on the subject, many in partnership with his wife Frances Schultz (visit his website at **www.rogerandfrances.com**). Every week in this column Roger deconstructs a classic or contemporary photograph. **Next week he considers an image by Jonas Bendiksen**

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